

[IMAGE]

Meat in the Middle

Let's face it - a lot of middle-aged guys have a little bit of a "beer gut." While body mass index (BMI) is commonly used for the classification of obese or overweight individuals, it does not account for this type of body fat distribution, which has been shown to be a strong predictor of disease risk factors.

A study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* compared the relative values of BMI and waist circumference for predicting cardiovascular disease and diabetes in almost 10,000 people, to determine which was more accurate. Results of the study showed that in both men and women, waist circumference was a better predictor than BMI when determining the health impacts of excess body fat in overweight or obese patients. Waist circumference accurately predicted odds for obesity-related risk factors like poor cholesterol levels, high blood sugar and high blood pressure.

You already know that being overweight is unhealthy. Now you also know that being large around the middle, as opposed to carrying extra weight in the hip region or elsewhere, may be even more unhealthy. If you have a weight problem, go to your doctor of chiropractic and ask for help. In addition to maximizing your health, you'll probably enhance your current quality of life.

Reference:

Zhu S, Wang Z, et al. Waist circumference and obesity-associated risk factors among whites in the third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey: Clinical action thresholds. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2002;76, pp. 743-749.

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