

Having excess belly fat is the outward sign of a deeper problem: abdominal fat wreaks havoc on the body, raising the risk for heart disease, diabetes, possibly even dementia and cancer. Belly fat produces renegade chemicals that cause disease-causing inflammation. *"It seems to have a more negative outcome on health than overall fat,"* says Richard N. Bergman, a professor at **USC's Keck School of Medicine**. Degenerative diseases are on the rise and these diseases all share the single underlying cause of inflammation from belly fat. So put aside weighting yourself and monitor your waistline to achieve good health.

Analyzing data from 27,000 people in 52 countries, scientists found that heart attack sufferers had a much higher waist-to-hip ratio (a measurement that reflects belly fat) compared with those who hadn't. *"This was the first study that really documented this relationship across all ethnic groups,"* says Dr. Arya M. Sharma, a co-author of the study from **McMaster University** in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, and director of the **Canadian Obesity Network**.

A 2004 study in the **New England Journal of Medicine** lent support to the notion that abdominal fat is more of a threat than fat elsewhere in the body. When clusters of fat cells take hold of the body, they can slowly poison and destroy vital organs, joints and tissues. In the 2004 **Lancet**, doctors concluded that a person's waist measurement is a more accurate predictor of heart attack than the body mass index, or BMI, which is a weight-to-height ratio.

A new e-book the **Belly Fat Epidemic** carries a strong message for consumers urging them to reduce belly fat or end up with debilitating diseases. In this e-book, Dr. Paul Yanick of the **American Academy of Quantum Medicine** says *"toxins called xenoestrogens make our bodies believe we are in the midst of a famine. Once your body thinks you're in a famine stage, it will store fat and xenoestrogens away like crazy. Predigested or synbiotic nourishment is the only way to stop this famine dilemma."*

Fat cells attract xenoestrogens like magnets, pulling them in and holding on tight so they become super resilient to diet changes and even fasting. Even consistent, moderate exercise appears unable to rid the body of vast amounts of deep abdominal fat as when the scales show the pounds are dropping, belly fat rarely decreases.

Other studies have linked belly fat to metabolic syndrome – a grouping of risk factors, such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure that can precede diabetes and heart disease. A **Wake Forest University** researcher, Barbara Nicklas reported that overweight, post-menopausal women, with the most abdominal fat were the most likely to have metabolic syndrome. And, a **Kaiser Permanente** 2004 study showed that people with the most belly fat were 145% more likely to develop dementia compared with people with the least amount of abdominal fat.

Research published in the journal **Obesity Research** links abdominal fat to the development of gallstones and breast cancer in women and overall risk of premature death in men. This study of 291 men reported that men with more abdominal fat died in greater numbers, independent of all other risk factors the scientists examined. Thus, a man with 2.2 pounds of visceral fat has double the risk of death compared with a man with 1.1 pounds of fat.

Other researchers at the **Kaiser Permanente** Division of Research in Oakland found that belly fat causes a higher risk of dementia. This study examined data from more than 6,700 people who were measured for abdominal obesity at ages 40 to 45 and were followed for more than 20 years. Those with the highest amounts of abdominal fat were much more likely to develop dementia. *"Being overweight is not only bad for your heart, it's bad for your brain,"* say the researchers.

Since many doctors prefer to treat what the fat cells are doing to their patients instead of treating the cause, the overwhelming majority of their patients remain overweight and sick. The very first step in the process of getting healthy should be to reduce your waistline. Pull out an old-fashioned tape measure and monitor your progress on this program.

Measuring the waistline with a tape measure may not be in vogue but increasing numbers of researchers – including the **Obesity Society**, a major research group – are saying that waist measurements should be part of every medical checkup. *"You go to the doctor and get your height and weight measured all the time, but physicians don't measure the waist,"* says Nicklas of the **Obesity Society**.

"Forget fad diets like low-carb (glycemic index), low-fat, liquid diets, the grapefruit diet, fat-flush plans, and starvation diets because they do not detoxify the body of fat-storing xenoestrogens," says Dr. Yanick. A bulge in the belly is a wake-up call. When a person accumulates excess belly fat stress becomes constant distress and the immune system becomes fragile and unable to defend the body from pathogens. Thus, with each toxic exposure, we accelerate the fat-storage process. Like a runaway train that is impossible to stop, these toxins take over our metabolism. To break this vicious cycle, we have to employ natural ways to excrete them out of our bodies. If we don't get control of our fat cells, they will generate inflammation around the clock and you will get sick (and stay sick).

