

How your waistline can expose your health risk



It's that time of year. You go to your doctor for the annual physical. The nurse has weighed you on the way in. Now you're sitting on the exam table in the horrible paper gown waiting for the doctor to appear.

The doc walks in the door and declares that you're officially obese. Your Body Mass Index (BMI) has been calculated and it's over 30. You hang your head in shame and your doctor tells you that it's time you lose some weight. You need to get your BMI under 30 at the very least. If you don't, you're at risk for diseases that are associated with obesity. Things like high blood pressure, diabetes and heart problems are lurking in your future. Your heart sinks. The rest of the physical is completed. You get dressed and you walk out the door.

Now what?

You don't even know how they calculated your BMI so how are you supposed to know when you have gotten it under 30? But I have news. You don't have to know how to calculate your BMI. That's complicated and not particularly accurate; especially if you are

very tall or very short. There is a better way.

New studies show there's a simple way to calculate if you are at risk for the diseases associated with obesity. It's the waist-to-height ratio. We all know how tall we are. We can all measure our waistline. All the tools we need are right at hand.

Here's how it works:

Measure your waistline one inch above your belly button. If you are feeling like cheating, you can even try to suck in your belly a bit. It's really the stuff you can't suck in that counts the most in this measurement. Jot that number down. If that number is one-half of your height in inches or less, then you are at a much lower risk for serious health issues that severely overweight people succumb to.

So here's an example. If you are a 5'6" woman your height in inches is 66. Right? Divide that by two. You want your waistline to be 33 inches or smaller.

If you are a 6'3" guy your height in inches is 75. Divide that by two and strive to hit a goal of a waistline that is 37.5" or less.

Simple math, but very important information. Here's some scary information. If your waist to height ratio shows your waistline equals 80% of your height, studies show you will live (on average) 17 years less than someone whose waist to height ratio falls at the 50% number. That's a big deal and a big incentive to keep an eye on your waistline and work to get your waist-to-height ratio on target.

Cheers,

Zola