



The Fearsome Five

To be diagnosed with the metabolic syndrome, a person has to have any three of the following five abnormalities. Having four or five of these conditions at the same time makes for an even more hazardous situation.

| Risk Factor | Criterion |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Abdominal Obesity | Waist circumference of 40 inches or more (35 inches for women) |
| Fasting Triglyceride Levels | 150 mg/dL or higher |
| HDL Cholesterol Levels | Below 40 mg/dL (below 50 mg/dL for women) |
| Blood Pressure | 130/85 mmHg or higher |
| Fasting Blood Sugar | 110 mg/dL or higher |

The Metabolic Syndrome: A Menace to Men's Health

Metabolic syndrome doubles a man's risk of having a stroke or dying from heart disease. The metabolic syndrome is a cluster of five closely related cardiovascular risk factors. Each is dangerous in its own right, but having several of these at the same time creates an even greater health risk than any one does on its own.

Abdominal Obesity – This is the fundamental factor in the metabolic syndrome. Unlike fat cells in the buttocks and thighs, fat around the abdominal organs resists the action of insulin, which can lead to diabetes. It also releases free fatty acids that are deposited in the liver, pancreas, and heart, where they can produce organ damage.

Triglycerides – Doctors still don't know if a high triglyceride level alone increases the risk of heart disease, but it's now clear that high triglyceride levels are indeed risky when they're part of the metabolic syndrome.

HDL Cholesterol – This is the "good" cholesterol because it helps carry cholesterol molecules away from arteries. The higher your HDL, the better.

Blood Pressure – Experts have been progressively lowering the cut-off for healthy blood pressure readings as they've learned more about elevated blood pressure and the risk of stroke, heart disease, and kidney failure. Although a pressure of 130/85 is only considered "prehypertension," it's enough to contribute to a diagnosis of the metabolic syndrome.

Blood Sugar – An elevated blood sugar level is the hallmark of diabetes. People with type 1 diabetes don't produce enough insulin, a hormone that helps regulate the amount of sugar that gets to your cells. People with the more common form of diabetes, type 2, produce insulin, but their tissues don't respond properly to the hormone, a condition called insulin resistance.

Daily exercise not only helps prevent this menace, but it can reverse the metabolic syndrome should it develop. Dietary changes can also develop a big blow to the metabolic syndrome. One study found that a Mediterranean diet and moderate exercise corrected the metabolic syndrome in 55% of participants. Here are some guidelines:

- Restrict simple sugars and other carbohydrates such as white rice, white bread, and potatoes.
- Eliminate saturated and trans fats which raise LDL ("bad") cholesterol.
- Keep your sodium intake below 2,300 mg a day.
- Avoid alcohol if you have high triglycerides and a stubborn inability to lose weight as part of the metabolic syndrome.

ConnectCare3
147 W. Airport Road
Lititz, PA 17543
www.connectcare3.com

E: info@connectcare3.com
Toll-Free: 877-223-2350
F: 717-735-3594

Patient Testimonial

It took a miserable experience to gain a great one...

I am an avid golfer and runner. I never thought that by the age of 46 I would require a hip replacement. When I was diagnosed with avascular necrosis (AVN), a condition where the blood supply to the bone is cut off and the bone begins to die, I did not know where to start. As a Benecon employee, I had given countless presentations on ConnectCare3 but never thought I would need the service myself.

I'll admit I was apprehensive to call ConnectCare3, but I'm sure glad that I did. Personal health issues can be difficult to talk about, but the initial telephone call to them gave my wife and me all the peace of mind we needed to begin my health journey. My ConnectCare3 Nurse Navigator was a calming force in the storm. She provided me with reading material and websites to further educate myself on AVN and the possible treatment options. My Nurse Navigator also researched and prepared a list of highly-regarded physicians for me to consider.

My ConnectCare3 Nurse Navigator accompanied me to an orthopedic specialist in Lancaster to get a second opinion. She had a list of questions ready to ask the physician. It was apparent she had done her homework and asked the questions I was too embarrassed to ask. As we visited with my physician, I had a million different thoughts running through my mind. You start to hear only what you want to, and it becomes quite confusing. Having my personal Nurse Navigator along to take notes and listen objectively was such a relief! Afterwards, she provided a summary of the appointment in an easy-to-read format that my wife and I referred to many times.

The average age of a patient suffering from avascular necrosis is 38. The exact cause of AVN is unknown, but there are several theories and associated risk factors. Treatment can vary depending on the age of the patient and the extent of the disease. In my case, it was without question that the left hip would require a total joint arthroplasty (a hip replacement). Arthroplasty is a fairly common procedure in which the damaged hip is replaced with a prosthesis (an artificial joint). My right hip required decompression, a surgical procedure where holes are drilled into the hip to release pressure and allow for increased blood flow.

The average recovery time for the procedures described above is generally six weeks, but I'm happy to report that I was up and moving in about five days. With the help of my Nurse Navigator and the rest of the ConnectCare3 staff, I played my first round of golf a mere 1½ months after my second surgery. I want to thank my ConnectCare3 Nurse Navigator for not only keeping my attitude positive but also for the constant reassurance that my once active lifestyle was not over.



Don Palmer of Lancaster, PA