

healthy

LIVING



CAN YOU BE SLIM AND UNHEALTHY?

It's interesting the stereotypes and generalisations we make as a society. Take for example weight.

There hasn't been an era where judgements haven't been made about a person based on their weight – excessive or deficient. Carrying excess weight used to be a sign of wealth; essentially the poor could not afford enough food to become overweight. Since the Industrial Revolution and the introduction of mass production commercially made food, canning and better transport infrastructure, the relative price and availability of food has given people with lower incomes increased access to food. This of course has had many great benefits, but as we've developed so too has the quality of processed food and not for the better – typically it is devoid of nutrients and high in fat, sugar, salt or calories. Sometimes all of the above.

These days a slim person is more likely to be associated with prosperity, with better access to fresh whole foods, gym memberships and a perception of more spare time because their essential needs have been met.

And so we have grown up generation after generation associating weight with social status and offering a pre-determined judgment of someone based purely upon this one aspect. We also assume these days that thin equates to being healthy and that overweight or obese people are unhealthy. But it's not that clear cut.

Certainly there is plenty of evidence to support the increased risk of disease in overweight or obese people – but you can be thin on the outside and be metabolically unhealthy – conversely you can be overweight but metabolically healthy.

So just what does it mean to be metabolically healthy then? Well it's based on much more than just your weight, the following measurements are all taken in to consideration:

- Visceral fat (that's the fat around your organs)
- Fat to muscle ratio
- Insulin sensitivity
- Cholesterol and triglyceride levels
- Blood pressure

What this means is that someone who is overweight but eats nutritious food and takes regular exercise can be healthier on the inside than a person of apparent 'healthy weight' who eats a poor diet and doesn't exercise. We need to remember not to judge a book by its cover, there's always more to the story.

Carrying too much visceral fat and displaying other markers of poor metabolic health is a significant strain on your overall health and can increase your risk of developing type II diabetes, heart disease and with the chronic inflammation

the risk of other degenerative diseases and early death is also increased. If you have these metabolic markers and you are overweight or obese then the risk of all of these conditions increases.

The good news is that you can improve your metabolic health very simply by:

- Exercising regularly (30 minutes 5 times per week)
- Eating a diet low in refined foods and sugars
- Eating plenty of whole foods

The quickest way to estimate your metabolic health is to look at where your body is storing fat. If it is predominantly around your mid-section this is an indication of increased visceral fat and insulin sensitivity. Measuring your waist to hip ratio can give you more of an idea about your metabolic health (see how to below), but the best way is to visit your health care provider for blood tests and body fat and muscle analysis.



WAIST TO HIP RATIO (WHR)

WAIST: _____ cm
HIPS: _____ cm
WHR RATIO: _____

Females	Body shape	Health Risk
0.80 or below	Pear	Low
0.81 to 0.85	Hourglass	Moderate
0.85+	Apple	High Risk

Males	Body shape	Health Risk
0.95 or below	Pear	Low
0.96 to 1.0	Hourglass	Moderate
1.0+	Apple	High Risk

People with more weight around their waist are at greater risk of lifestyle related diseases such as heart disease and diabetes, than those who have weight around their hips.

Sources:

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