

your **BEST SELF**

“Design Your Happy and Healthy Life”

► MORE THAN JUST NUMBERS: Bringing It All Together

The relationship between weight, blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose (your biometric values) all play a part towards a healthy you. Blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose are numbers that won't always present warning signs.

MEANING BEHIND THE NUMBERS; RISKS FROM OUT OF RANGE INDIVIDUAL NUMBERS.

- 1. High Blood Pressure (HBP)** – HBP increases the heart's workload and leads the heart muscle to become thicker and stiff, so the heart can't work properly.
 - 2. Total cholesterol** – When too much total cholesterol circulates in your blood, it can slowly fill up the inner walls of your arteries that feed the heart, and eventually lead to heart disease and stroke.
 - 3. HDL or “good cholesterol”** – There are many healthy fats that raise good cholesterol, which protects against dangerous blockages that can lead to heart disease. Good fats are:
 - **Monounsaturated fats**, such as olive oil, canola oil, nuts and avocados.
 - **Polyunsaturated fats** found in omega-3 fish flax seed, walnuts and pumpkin seeds.
 - 4. Glucose** – Blood sugar is the first test done to check for pre-diabetes and diabetes. *(Even when a person with diabetes has their glucose levels under control, diabetes increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. The risks are even greater if blood sugar is not controlled.)*
 - 5. BMI** – Being overweight or obese can raise blood pressure, lower HDL (good) cholesterol levels and make diabetes more likely to develop.
 - 6. Waist circumference** – Studies show that health risks of excess weight are also affected by *where* it is carried on the body. Visceral fat that accumulates around the abdomen can pose more health risks, even in people of normal weight. This extra weight in the midsection is more dangerous, in part because it is stored around the internal organs.
- Your health care provider will identify needs and health goals.



“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” ~ As defined by World Health Organization (WHO)

▶ UNDERSTAND AND LOWER YOUR RISK

The Perfect Storm

Metabolic Syndrome is a cluster of high risk factors that together increase a person's chances of cardiovascular problems. Just as high blood pressure is a risk for cardiovascular disease, so is high cholesterol. Add these together with obesity and high glucose levels and you can develop the perfect storm for heart problems.

Metabolic Risk Factors. Three or more individual risk factors can produce a diagnosis of metabolic syndrome. You can have any of these risk factors by themselves, but they tend to occur together. Lifestyle changes can reverse these high risk factors.

1. A large waistline (greater than 40" for men or 35" for women).
2. High blood pressure can damage your heart and lead to plaque buildup.
3. High fasting blood sugar, which may also be an early sign of diabetes.
4. High total cholesterol.

Only your doctor can diagnosis metabolic syndrome. If you have multiple high readings, follow-up with your primary care provider to diagnose, discuss and work up a plan to manage the risk factors long-term.

What You Can Do To Improve Your Health

Manage Weight



Getting to and maintaining a healthy weight is a way to lower cholesterol levels, blood pressure and lower other risks from obesity. Even losing 5-10% of your body weight if you are overweight/obese can have significant positive impacts on your biometric values.

Avoid foods and drinks with added sugar. Consuming a lot of refined sugars overloads the liver with fructose and immediately turns it into fat. Sugary drinks should especially be avoided because they don't suppress hunger, leading to higher caloric intake.

Mix strength training and cardio physical activity. Strength training builds muscle, allowing you to burn more calories throughout the day than cardio activity alone.

Get enough sleep and reduce stress. Stress and lack of sleep are huge contributing factors in weight gain. Because stress releases the hormone cortisol, our bodies cling to the fat.

It's common to gain weight in the belly area. There is hope to get rid of it through nutritious eating, increased exercise and stress management.

Eating Habits To Change Your Life



Changing your diet is for more than just weight loss. Your energy, mood and emotional health can improve along with your meals. Try these few small changes:

Opt for healthier foods. Eat more fruits, vegetables, nuts, whole-grain breads, seafood, lean meats, and beans. Avoid foods with added sugars, foods that are high in fat and refined grains, like those found in processed foods.

Make it at home. Cooking food at home gives you control over the ingredients. Processed foods are often stripped of their nutrients then loaded with sugar, salt and fat. Preparing your meals for the week can save time and cost less than purchasing pre-packaged foods or eating out.

Read labels. Reading the labels on food will help you choose healthier items.

Move More

Exercise can naturally make you feel good physically and mentally. Moderate physical activity can manage stress and burn excess calories to control weight. It further reduces cholesterol by stimulating enzymes that help excrete them out of your system.

Cardio activity increases your breathing and heart rate. It improves blood flow and oxygen to the brain and improve overall fitness. *Start out with 10-15 minutes at a time and gradually build up to the American Heart Association's (AHA) recommended 30 minutes of moderate-intensity at least 5 days a week.*

Strength and resistance training makes your muscles stronger to help you perform everyday activities like carrying groceries. Stronger muscles also boost your metabolic rate, which means you burn more calories even when resting. *AHA recommends strength training at least twice per week.*

Stretching feels good as it relaxes tense muscles, increases circulation and increases your range of motion, which helps to avoid injury.

A mix of the types of exercises above can slow the loss of bone density to prevent breaks and enhance your ability to manage everyday tasks.



Managing Stress

Stress can lead to many unhealthy behaviors, including smoking, drinking excess alcohol and making poor food choices. Stress directly affects our bodies by releasing stress hormones into the blood, making the heart beat faster and constricting blood vessels.

You can learn to cope with the stress you can control so you feel happier, healthier and more relaxed. Effective coping skills and relaxation exercises can help address the symptoms of stress and build resilience towards the causes.

COPING STRATEGIES INCLUDE:

- **Reframe the situation.** Put things in perspective by looking at the bigger picture and see the lighter side of things.
- **Journal thoughts and feelings.** Reflecting on feelings can help ease pent-up anxiety.
- **Take time to yourself.** Find what you like and make time for hobbies. Taking time to do the things you enjoy provides the mind a break and gives life more meaning and purpose.
- **Strong social connections.** Strong social support groups of family and friends help to buffer stress.

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES WHEN EXPERIENCING STRESS:

- **Exercise** flushes out stress hormones that have built up in the body. Any physical activity can help reduce stress, but also try, yoga, tai chi or Pilates. All promote serenity through gentle flow of movement and shift your focus to breathing.
- **Meditate** or try coloring. Taking time to just clear your mind can do wonders for symptoms of stress.
- **Relaxing music.** Music can instantly lift mood and even lower your resting heart rate.
- **Have a laugh.** Laughter brings us together, cuts through tension and provides an emotional release.



▶ PREVENTIVE CARE POINTS

HEALTHY EATING: Start with small changes.

- **Focus on whole fruits and vary your veggies** to include green, red and orange choices.
- **Make your grains whole.** Look for high fiber, whole grain foods.
- **Move to low-fat** and fat-free dairy.
- **Mix up your proteins foods** to include beans, nuts, seeds and soy along with lean meats, poultry and seafood.
- **Read labels** and choose foods with less saturated fat, sugar and sodium.

Great online resources: ChooseMyPlate.gov, eatright.org

MOVING MORE: Get and stay active for life!

- **Dress comfortably.** Wear proper fitting shoes, appropriate clothes for the weather, or workout, and wear sun screen when outside.
- **Make it fun.** Find a health buddy, vary activities like walking, swimming, biking and track your progress on an app like, MyFitnessPal.com
- **Get fit for a cause.** Sign up for charity walks, runs or even get on an app that donates to causes you may support.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of water, 8 glasses per day is only a minimum recommendation, drink more if you're active and sweating.

Web resources: Heart.org, letsmove.org, ResQWalk.com

EMOTIONAL HEALTH: Build resilience to deal with life's challenges and recover quickly from setbacks.

- **Practice positive self-talk.** Negative thinking drains energy and fuels anxiety and depression.
- **Build supportive relationships.** It's not about the number of friends in your circle, but the deep relationships with people that make you feel valued.
- **Avoid unhealthy ways of coping with stress.** Smoking, drinking too much alcohol and lashing out in anger are examples of temporary ways to deal with stress that cause more problems in the long run.

Web resources: APA.org, mentalhealth.gov, NAMI.org

PREVENTIVE CARE:

- **Have a primary care provider (PCP)** as your trusted go-to health advisor. Share your results from a biometric screening to obtain recommendations for next steps.
- **Be a smart health care consumer.** Make good medical decisions by being informed and asking questions.
- **Stay current on your annual well-care visits,** recommended preventive screenings and immunizations.

Web resources: familydoctor.org, cdc.gov, medlineplus.gov

IN-HOUSE RESOURCES:

YOUR INFORMATION HERE!

- **Log in to complete your Health Risk Assessment (HRA)** on www.MyCigna.com where you can also find providers, review claims, etc.
- **Begin a Personal Health Coaching Program** on topics like weight management, tobacco cessation, stress management and chronic disease management by calling Cigna at (561) 233-5460.
- **Talk to a nurse any time of the day** by calling the 24 Hour Cigna Health Information Line at (800) 244-6224.
- **Stay involved with the PBC Employee Wellness Program** and participate in on-site health and wellness classes, activities and events. Contact them at (561) 233-5451 or wellness@pbcgov.org
- **Obtain free counseling services** if you need them through the PBC Employee Assistance Program. Contact them at (561) 233-5460.

