

On cool crisp days, roasted onions make a delicious side dish with turkey, beef or pork. That mouthwatering flavor is hard to beat.



Heart Health Awareness

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The Metabolic Syndrome: What Is It And Are You At Risk?



Lisa M. DeRosimo, MD

Do you carry extra weight in your belly? Is your blood pressure on the high side? Have you been told your blood sugars are borderline high? Do you have high triglycerides or low "good" cholesterol? If the answer is "yes" for any of these questions, you may be on the way to developing the Metabolic Syndrome.

The Metabolic Syndrome is a set of risk factors that can increase the likelihood of having a stroke, heart attack or diabetes. About 25% of Americans have this disease; however, many are not aware of their increased risk. Prevention and early treatment are the best medicine for the Metabolic Syndrome. This article will help you to recognize your risk factors and change your habits to improve your health.

The five risk factors for the Metabolic Syndrome are: abdominal weight (waist over 35 inches in women or 40 inches in men); elevated blood pressure greater than 130/85; low HDL (good cholesterol under 50 for women, under 40 for men); fasting blood sugar above 110; and triglyceride fat level over 150. If you have 3 or more of these risk factors, then you probably have the Metabolic Syndrome.

The usual culprit for the Metabolic Syndrome is poor diet and lack of exercise. Most people with the Metabolic Syndrome are overweight, which leads to insulin resistance. This means our body cells do not respond to the usual insulin levels, so the body ends up putting out more insulin for the same effects. However, insulin is a fat storing hormone; so, a vicious cycle begins. It becomes more difficult to lose weight, and the other risk factors

(high blood pressure, high blood sugar, and high triglycerides) worsen.

Fortunately the treatment and prevention of the Metabolic Syndrome is completely in your hands. First, the insulin resistant state can be reversed by choosing the right diet. Eat smaller portions and include balanced snacks during the day to prevent hunger. Avoid highly processed foods, which raise the blood sugar levels quickly. Choose whole grains and vegetables. Foods in their original natural form are the healthiest choices, in general. Avoid products with bleached flour or high sugar levels. Also, limit fruits to 3 servings per day, as fruit can raise blood sugar levels too.

Finally, get moving. The most powerful medicine to treat the Metabolic Syndrome is exercise. Exercise reduces weight, raises HDL, lowers triglycerides, lowers blood pressure, and reverses insulin resistance without any side effects. Exercise can include anything from yard work to walking, swimming or weight lifting. Any extra movement counts as activity in the day. You will look and feel better immediately after increasing your activity.

As you change your lifestyle to improve your diet and increase your activity, weight loss naturally follows. Small weight loss is all it takes. A 5% - 10% loss is all that is needed to greatly improve your health and reduce your risk for a heart attack, stroke, or diabetes. Good luck!

Lisa M. DeRosimo, MD, MS is an expert in bariatrics, the study of the causes, treatment and prevention of obesity. She is the founder and director of The Weight and Wellness Center where patients receive comprehensive nutritional and medical evaluations, treatment and long-term obesity prevention. Dr. DeRosimo is a member of the Foundation for the Advancement of Cardiac Therapies (FACT) Advisory Board and will be the Medical Director for FACT's Heart and Healthy Living Institute when it opens. For information please contact Dr. DeRosimo at 561-586-3646.



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Help Shape Your Health Destiny— Eat Nutrient Rich Foods!

Does heart disease or cancer run in your family? There are ways to stack the odds in your favor.

Taking your vitamins and eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables—such as raspberries and spinach—can make up for your not-so-healthy genes.

Your genes contain the biological programs that shape your health destiny. But you don't have to be at their mercy. When you eat antioxidant and nutrient rich foods and supplement with optimal levels of certain vitamins you enable your genes to function at their best.

One example is folic acid. Millions of Americans have a defect in a gene that affects how the body uses the B vitamin. As a result, they are more likely to get heart disease, cancer, and Alzheimer's disease. A woman with this defect is more likely also to have a baby with birth defects.

You can't change the gene, but taking a daily multivitamin and eating certain fruits and vegetables help that gene to work better.

Here are some steps you can take to take charge of your genes, and improve your health destiny...

- **Take a high-potency daily multivitamin**, which includes the B vitamins. Several of these vitamins help suppress cancer-promoting genes.
- **Take Fish Oils**. They influence the genes that control fat storage.
- **Eat spinach and dark leafy green salads**. These vegetables are rich in

folic acid, a B vitamin needed to make and repair genes.

● **Eat berries**. Raspberries are loaded with antioxidants, which protect genes from damage.

● **Drink green tea**. It protects genes from the cancer-promoting effects of dioxin and other pollutants.

● **Go easy on the carbs and sugars**. To burn them, your body actually uses up B vitamins that would otherwise protect your genes.



Jolie Martin Root

And don't take genes so seriously. Yes, scientists have mapped the human genome—the collection of some 50,000 genes that influence who we are, our health, and our risk of disease. But even the infamous breast cancer genes BRCA1 and BRCA2 have to mutate before they cause cancer to develop. (They mutate when they are impacted by free radicals. The antioxidants rich foods protect against this.) Undamaged, BRCA1 enhances lactation and governs T cells, protecting you from cancer and infections!

So the lesson here is to be aware of the importance of your food choices! And take supplements to protect your genes and create a future of radiant health!

Jolie Martin Root is a Florida licensed nutrition counselor and has been consulting for over 20 years. As a medical journalist, she hosts a weekly radio program "Food For Thought" heard in Denver. She is co-author of a monthly newsletter, "Prescription for Healthy Living." Send your questions to her at BoomerTimes & SeniorLife.

Gene•Right™

We can't change our genes, but we can change how they function. Carlson Laboratories recognizes nutrition's effect on gene activity and created Gene•Right™ to help promote optimal levels of nutrients to promote the gene activity required for good health.

Gene•Right™ is a multiple vitamin and mineral supplement with fish oil and lutein. In addition to essential vitamins and minerals, Gene•Right™ supplies extra antioxidants for fighting free radicals that can damage our genes. Each soft gel has extra folate, B6 and B12 to promote healthy gene expression for healthy homocysteine levels. Omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA have been added to help promote the metabolizing of fats by healthy gene activity.



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Carlson J.R. CARLSON LABORATORIES, INC.

15 College Drive, Arlington Heights, IL 60004-1985
847-255-1600 • Fax: 847-255-1605
E-mail: carlson@carlsonlabs.com • Web-site: www.carlsonlabs.com