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Elmer James, owner & Maggie

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- Bird nests
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Tuesday, January 9, 2007

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Pictured: Mark Kirkhoff and Jeff Kirkhoff, Financial Advisors.

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You first.



Franklin Meadows proudly presents one of our success stories. Originally from Brown County, Myrtis Beck came to us from Morgantown in June 2006. She had a pelvic fracture and several other multi-compression fractures. Starting out in a wheelchair, Myrtis was soon walking on her own in two and a half months throughout our home. She has worked very hard with our physical therapy department towards her road to recovery. Her two favorite activities here are exercising in our physical therapy department and meeting new friends. Myrtis also loves the fact that we are located right next to Johnson Memorial Hospital. She thanks all of her family and friends for their support and prayers. "I love all of the friendly people here at Franklin Meadows and everyone is so nice"- Myrtis Beck.

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THE MYSTERIOUS 'SPARE TIRE'

HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL ADVISER
By the faculty of Harvard Medical School

Q: What causes "middle-age spread," and is there anything I can do about it?

A: Also known as a "spare tire," an expanding waistline is quite common, especially after people hit middle age. Men are more prone to gaining inches around the middle than women, who tend to store fat in their hips and thighs. But women often complain that after menopause, extra pounds tend to park themselves around their midsections, as fat storage begins favoring the upper body. Even women who don't actually gain weight may still gain inches at the waist.

As it turns out, there are two types of fat in the belly: subcutaneous fat, which you can grab with your hand, and abdominal or visceral fat, which surrounds your organs (see graphic). Excess amounts of visceral fat can be dangerous to your health. People with visceral fat are more likely to develop heart disease and type 2 diabetes. In women, a large waistline is also linked with breast cancer and the need for gallbladder surgery. In men, visceral fat increases the risk of erectile dysfunction or impotence. All in all, waistlines above 35 inches for women, and 40 inches for men increase the risk of disease.

Heredity may explain why some people are more likely to accumulate visceral fat. Scientists have identified a number of genes that help determine how many fat cells a person develops and where these cells are located. Hormones are another possible contributor, at least in women. At menopause, estrogen production drops, and the ratio of androgens (male hormones present in small amounts in women) to estrogens rises. This shift may increase visceral fat after menopause. Lower estrogen levels at menopause have also been linked with higher levels of cortisol. This stress hormone tends to increase fat build-up in the belly.



Richard W. Jackson, M.D.
Kevin E. Julian, M.D.
Kurt R. Martin, M.D.

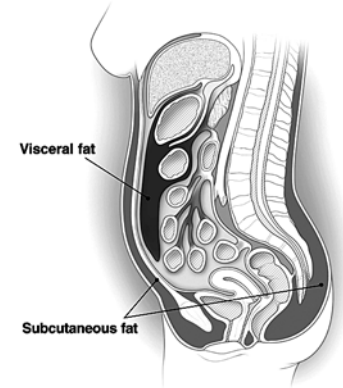
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Types of abdominal fat

Fat in the belly area comes in two forms: fat that surrounds the organs (called visceral fat) or fat that lies between the skin and abdominal wall (subcutaneous fat).



© 2007 President and Fellows of Harvard College. Illustration by Scott Leighton.

Of course, the underlying problem is excess weight, caused by overeating and not enough exercise. So the best way to combat visceral fat is to lose weight. Pay attention to portion size, and eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains and lean protein while cutting back on white bread, refined-grain pasta and sugary drinks.

Exercise helps a lot, too. But don't waste your time trying to "spot reduce" your waistline -- it doesn't work. The only way to reduce your visceral fat is to reduce fat throughout your body. The best way is by doing moderate-intensity physical activity (brisk walking, jogging or biking, for example) for at least 30 minutes a day. In a study comparing nonexercising adults with those exercising at different intensities, researchers at Duke University Medical Center found that the non-exercisers experienced a nearly 9 percent gain in visceral fat after six months. Subjects who exercised the equivalent of walking or jogging 12 miles per week put on no visceral fat. And those who exercised the equivalent of jogging 20 miles per week lost both visceral and subcutaneous fat.

Exercising with weights may also help fight visceral fat. A University of Pennsylvania study followed overweight or obese women, ages 24 to 44, for two years. Compared to participants who received only advice about exercise, those given an hour of weight training twice a week reduced their proportion of body fat by nearly 4 percent. They also were more successful in keeping off visceral fat. Spot exercising, such as doing sit-ups, can tighten abdominal muscles. But it won't get at visceral fat.

Plastic surgery such as liposuction can remove only subcutaneous fat, which may improve your profile. The procedure cannot remove deeper visceral fat and does not improve health. What's more, most people regain fat that's been removed surgically.

Scientists hope to develop drug treatments that target visceral fat. For example, studies of the weight-loss medication sibutramine (Meridia) have shown that the drug's greatest effects are on visceral fat. Rimonabant (Acomplia) is the first of a new class of drugs that block a receptor in the brain that increases appetite. The drug seems to lower the accumulation of fat at the waist to a modest degree, but it's not yet approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

For now, experts stress that lifestyle modification -- especially exercise -- is the very best way to fight abdominal fat. To spare your heart and metabolism, do everything you can to shed your "spare tire".

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