

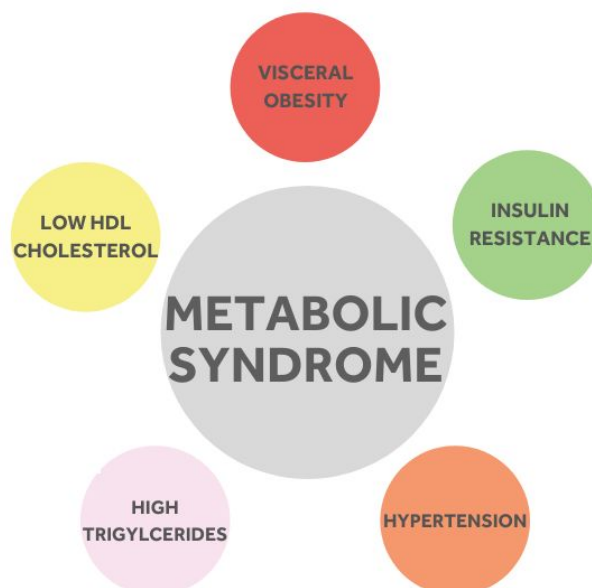
Module 2, Lesson 3 Handout:

Metabolic Syndrome

Metabolic syndrome isn't a disease. Doctors don't diagnose it like diabetes or hypertension. It's a broad diagnosis and may be different for everyone who has it. Metabolic syndrome is a cluster of risk factors that increase your risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes. More than a third of adults in the United States have it, so it's likely many of your clients do. Fortunately, a person can take control of their metabolic syndrome and can decrease these risk factors through lifestyle changes, outlined below. Again, this is why a healthcare practitioner's role is vital here.

Characteristics of Metabolic Syndrome

- **Increased blood pressure.** Clients don't have to have diagnosed hypertension to fall into this category. Both high cholesterol and high blood pressure can contribute to the buildup of plaque in the arteries. Plaques can narrow and harden the arteries and may lead to a heart attack or stroke
- **High blood sugar.** Similarly, your clients don't need a diabetes diagnosis to have high blood sugar. Their doctor may tell them that their glucose was elevated in a blood test, or the marker for diabetes, called hemoglobin A1c, was high in one of their lab results. Work with your clients to make lifestyle changes to control excess weight gain. This can decrease their risk of developing insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes
- **Excess body fat around the waist.** A waist to hip ratio greater than 0.8 for women and 1.0 for men are associated with higher risks



There are common **risk factors** you should be aware of that increase the risk for metabolic syndrome:

- **Age** The risk of metabolic syndrome increases with age
- **Ethnicity** In the United States, Hispanic people appear to be at the greatest risk of developing metabolic syndrome with more women than men affected
- **Obesity** Carrying too much weight, especially in the waist, increases risk of metabolic syndrome
- **Diabetes** Clients are more likely to have metabolic syndrome if they had diabetes during pregnancy (gestational diabetes) or if they have a family history of type 2 diabetes
- **Other diseases** Risk is higher for those who've had nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, polycystic ovary syndrome or sleep apnea

Your Role

Prevention is key to halting and reversing metabolic syndrome. You can do your part by helping clients maintain a healthy lifestyle and working with their other healthcare providers for follow up care and disease management. Encourage your clients to eat fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein (limit saturated fat and salt), Sweat Often and maintain healthy habits to Stress Less.