

Menopause weight gain: Stop the Middle Age Spread



Healthy Lifestyle
Women's health

Most women gain weight as they age, but excess pounds aren't inevitable. To minimize menopause weight gain, step up your activity level and enjoy a healthy diet.

By Mayo Clinic Staff

As you get older, you might notice that maintaining your usual weight becomes more difficult. In fact, many women gain weight around the menopause transition.

Menopause weight gain isn't inevitable, however. You can reverse course by paying attention to healthy-eating habits and leading an active lifestyle.

What causes menopause weight gain?

The hormonal changes of menopause might make you more likely to gain weight around your abdomen than around your hips and thighs. But, hormonal changes alone don't necessarily cause menopause weight gain. Instead, the weight gain is usually related to aging, as well as lifestyle and genetic factors.

For example, muscle mass typically diminishes with age, while fat increases. Loss of muscle mass decreases the rate at which your body uses calories, which can make it more challenging to maintain a healthy weight. If you continue to eat as you always have and don't increase your physical activity, you're likely to gain weight.

Genetic factors also might play a role in menopause weight gain. If your parents or other close relatives carry extra weight around the abdomen, you're likely to do the same.

Other factors, such as a lack of exercise, unhealthy eating and not enough sleep, might contribute to menopause weight gain. When people don't get enough sleep, they tend to snack more and consume more calories.

How risky is weight gain after menopause?

Menopause weight gain can have serious implications for your health. Excess weight increases the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, breathing problems and various types of cancer, including breast, colon and endometrial cancer.

What's the best way to prevent weight gain after menopause?

There's no magic formula for preventing — or reversing — menopause weight gain. Simply stick to weight-control basics:

- **Move more.** Aerobic activity can help you shed excess pounds and maintain a healthy weight. Strength training counts, too. As you gain muscle, your body burns calories more efficiently — which makes it easier to control your weight. For most healthy adults, experts recommend moderate aerobic activity, such as brisk walking, for at least 150 minutes a week or vigorous aerobic activity, such as jogging, for at least 75 minutes a week. In addition, strength training exercises are recommended at



Menopause weight gain: Stop the Middle Age Spread

least twice a week. If you want to lose weight or meet specific fitness goals, you might need to exercise more.

- **Eat less.** To maintain your current weight — let alone lose excess pounds — you might need about 200 fewer calories a day during your 50s than you did during your 30s and 40s.

To reduce calories without skimping on nutrition, pay attention to what you're eating and drinking. Choose more fruits, vegetables and whole grains, particularly those that are less processed and contain more fiber.

Legumes, nuts, soy, meat, fish or chicken are healthy protein options. Replace butter, stick margarine and shortening with oils, such as olive or vegetable oil.

- **Check your sweet habit.** Added sugars account for nearly 300 calories a day in the average American diet. About half of these calories come from sugar-sweetened beverages, such as soft drinks, juices, energy drinks, flavored waters, and sweetened coffee tea.

Other foods that contribute to excess dietary sugar include cookies, pies, cakes, doughnuts, ice cream and candy.

- **Limit alcohol.** Alcoholic beverages add excess calories to your diet and increase the risk of gaining weight.
- **Seek support.** Surround yourself with friends and loved ones who support your efforts to eat a healthy diet and increase your physical activity. Better yet, team up and make the lifestyle changes together.

Remember, successful weight loss at any stage of life requires permanent changes in diet and exercise habits. Commit to lifestyle changes and enjoy a healthier you.



Menopause weight gain: Stop the Middle Age Spread

References:

1. *Changes in weight and fat distribution.* North American Menopause Society. <http://www.menopause.org/for-women/sexual-health-menopause-online/changes-at-midlife/changes-in-weight-and-fat-distribution>. Accessed March 17, 2016.
2. Halter JB, et al. *Menopause and midlife health changes.* In: *Hazzard's Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology.* 6th ed. New York, N.Y.: The McGraw-Hill Companies; 2009. <http://www.accessmedicine.com>. Accessed March 8, 2016.
3. Palmer BF, et al. *The sexual dimorphism of obesity.* *Molecular and Cellular Endocrinology.* 2015;0:113.
4. *Menopause and weight.* *Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.* <http://www.eatright.org/resource/health/wellness/healthy-aging/menopause-and-weight>. Accessed March 17, 2016.
5. Jung SY, et al. *Risk profiles for weight gain among postmenopausal women: A classification and regression tree analysis approach.* *PLOS One.* 2015; 10:1.
6. *Understanding adult obesity.* *Weight-Control Information Network.* <http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-topics/weight-control/understanding/Pages/understanding-adult-overweight-and-obesity.aspx>. Accessed March 8, 2016.
7. Vatrella A. *Abdominal adiposity and lung function in women.* *Nutrition, Metabolism and Cardiovascular Diseases.* In press. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0939475315302076>. Accessed March 4, 2016.
8. Cerhan JR, et al. *A pooled analysis of waist circumference and mortality in 650,000 adults.* *Mayo Clinic Proceedings.* 2014;89:335.
9. *Losing weight.* *American Heart Association.* http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/WeightManagement/LosingWeight/Losing-Weight_UCM_307904_Article.jsp#.Vt5IT0ZjZDQ. Accessed March 7, 2016.
10. *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines>. Accessed March 8, 2016.
11. Shah RV, et al. *Diet and adipose tissue distributions: The multi-ethnic study of atherosclerosis.* *Nutrition, Metabolism & Cardiovascular Diseases.* 2016;26:185.
12. Greenberg JA, et al. *Chocolate-candy consumption and three-year weight gain among postmenopausal U.S. women.* *Obesity.* 2015;23:677.
13. *Obesity and cancer risk.* *National Cancer Institute.* <http://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/obesity/obesity-fact-sheet>. Accessed April 11, 2016.

April 21, 2016

Original article: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/womens-health/in-depth/menopause-weight-gain/art-20046058>

<https://www.wayneunc.org/site-search/?term=menopause>

http://www.mypersonalpath.com/gtg/?_ga=2.136611576.932109305.1556042097-677379417.1556042097#/1/



Menopause weight gain: Stop the Middle Age Spread

3/27/19

Comments from email poll:

“Need to learn more!”

“You are very right. This is a topic that is not really discussed in any depth. I would certainly be interested in more information. Thank you.”

“Meeee!!!!!! I need all the information I can get....the STRUGGLE is REAL!!!!!!”

“IM INTERESTED”

“Michelle, I am very interested... I search online constantly in regard to it... The struggle is real...”

“Yes !!! I am learning trial and error!! Menopause is hateful!!!! Tell me more.”

“Definitely interested needless to say I am going through it right now. Some days I feel crazy as a bed bug others I just want to lay in bed and cry all day. I am on medication for it but I want to stop taking the medication and replace it with natural hormonal therapy. Any way whatever you are offering please sing me up.
Thanks”

“MICHELLE, OH MY GOODNESS... I am so interested!!!!!! Please lets get this conversation started! I need help.”

“This would be wonderful! I would love to learn more. It would be great to hear what “real” women have to share not just what the books tell you.”

“I would be interested! Thank you for thinking about topic. Most older women need it but don’t know who or where to turn.”