

Waist Measurement for Central Obesity

Central obesity is a clinical term which refers to excessive fat around the abdomen. This condition is a risk factor for many chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes. One way to determine if a person has central obesity – and to assess the person’s risk for developing chronic diseases - is to measure the waist circumference (WC).



Ethnic differences in central obesity standards

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has set different benchmarks of central obesity based on ethnicity and gender:

Ethnicity	Gender	Waist circumference (cm)
Caucasians	Men	>94
	Women	>80
Asians	Men	>90
	Women	>80

Controlling the amount of abdominal fat

Excessive abdominal fat can affect body mechanisms and increases the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes. For example, as visceral fat, which surrounds the organs in the abdominal region, is located close to the vein which carries blood from the intestinal area to the liver, an excessive amount of visceral fat will release fat to the liver and increase the amount of LDL (bad) cholesterol and lower the HDL (good) cholesterol.

Visceral fat will also decrease the ability of insulin to deliver blood glucose to cells, thus resulting in excessive sugar in the blood, eventually causing diabetes.

Measuring the waist circumference

Waist circumference should be measured at the midpoint between the lower ribcage and the top of the iliac crest (pelvis). A stretch-resistant tape should be used to surround the waist comfortably and not too tightly. The person being assessed should be asked to stand straight and to relax (i.e. do not tuck in the abdominal wall), have both hands at the sides,

feet positioned close together and standing in a midpoint. The measurement should be taken when exhaling.

To obtain a more accurate result, the measurement can be done twice. If the difference between both measurements is less than 1cm, the average should be calculated. If it is more than 1cm, the measurement should be repeated.

Waist circumference and body mass index (BMI)

It is widely believed that when predicting a person’s risk of developing chronic diseases, measuring the waist circumference is more useful than measuring BMI alone, as BMI may not be accurate for some groups in the population, such as athletes or people with a large body frame. Therefore, waist circumference is becoming an important measurement in predicting a person’s risk for developing chronic diseases. *(For more information, please see patient information Body Mass Index and Body Fat Percentage).*

How to reduce excessive abdominal fat

In general, diet and exercise are keys to controlling abdominal fat. Consume a well balanced diet and reduce the amount of fat, sweetened foods and sodium. Increase the intake of dietary fibre including fruits and vegetables, wholegrain products such as oatmeal, brown rice, or wholemeal bread. Taking up moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity for at least 150 minutes throughout week, is also recommended.

Before starting any regime, it is always wise to seek the advice from a doctor or a dietitian.



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References:

UpToDate health information source

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量度腰圍 瞭解中央肥胖

「中央肥胖」是許多慢性疾病（如心血管疾病和糖尿病等）的風險因素。當腹部積聚過量脂肪，臨床醫學界中便稱之為「中央肥胖」。量度腰圍能測定個人是否屬於中央肥胖，以評估其患上慢性疾病的風險。



不同種族的中央肥胖標準

世界衛生組織按性別及種族，訂立不同的中央肥胖標準。

種族	性別	腰圍（釐米）
白種人	男性	>94
	女性	>80
亞洲人	男性	>90
	女性	>80

控制腹部積聚的脂肪

腹部脂肪過多有損健康，影響身體機能運作，增加個人患上心血管疾病和糖尿病的風險。由於內臟脂肪位於負責將血液由腸臟輸送至肝臟的血管附近，過多的內臟脂肪會分泌脂肪至肝臟，增加血液中低密度脂蛋白（壞膽固醇）的水平，同時降低高密度脂蛋白（好膽固醇）的水平。

內臟脂肪亦會削減胰島素傳遞葡萄糖至細胞的能力，令血液糖份含量超標，導致糖尿病。

量度腰圍

正確量度腰圍的方法，應在肋骨底部邊緣與髭骨頂部的中間位置、用不帶彈性的量尺圍繞腰部進行量度，並確保量尺不要勒得過緊。量度時，應站直、放鬆（不要收腹），雙手垂在兩邊，雙腳併攏，保持身體平衡。腰圍以呼氣時量度得出的數值為準。

為使結果更準確，可量度腰圍兩次。如兩次量度的數值相差少於一公分，則取兩者的平均數值。如兩者相差多於一公分，則需要重新量度腰圍。

腰圍與體重指標 (BMI)

體重指標對運動員及骨骼魁梧的人來說或不盡準確，惟很多人相信，量度腰圍較單單量度體重指標更有效反映個人患上慢性疾病的潛在風險，因此，以腰圍的數值評估有關風險愈趨普遍。（如欲瞭解更多，請參閱本院「認識體重指標與脂肪百分比」的健康資訊單張）

如何減去多餘腹部脂肪

一般而言，控制飲食和勤做運動是控制腹部脂肪增長的關鍵。注意均衡飲食、減少進食肥膩、含高糖份或鹽份的食物，多選含膳食纖維的食物，包括蔬果、全麥食品（如：燕麥、糙米和全麥麵包）。另外，應每星期進行至少150分鐘中度劇烈的帶氧運動。

請注意，改變任何生活規律前，應先徵詢醫生或註冊營養師的意見。



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參考資料：

UpToDate 網站

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