

BELLY FAT

HOW TO LOSE THAT SPARE TIRE

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A spare tire comes in handy if you have a flat, but who wants one around their middle? Too much belly fat is linked with a number of health problems. Here's how to tell if you need to trim your waistline and, if so, what you can do.

BELLY FAT AND YOUR BODY

The fat that surrounds the mid-part of your body tends to wrap itself around your internal organs, too. Belly fat is also called visceral fat, and unlike the fat that lies right under your skin, it's a more harmful kind of fat.

WHY TOO MUCH BELLY FAT CAN BE HARMFUL

Studies show that increased belly fat may lead to certain health problems, such as:

- heart disease.
- type 2 diabetes.
- fatty liver disease.
- breast cancer.
- depression.

Belly fat can cause areas of your body to become inflamed, which may cause many of the health problems listed above. Belly fat is linked with high bad cholesterol (LDL) and low good cholesterol (HDL). It's also linked to insulin resistance,

which means your body starts to ignore the insulin you produce. Insulin resistance can lead to type 2 diabetes. If you already have diabetes, insulin resistance makes it harder for the insulin you make or inject to work well.

HOW TO TELL

One look in the mirror can indicate if you have too much belly fat. Here are some tell-tale signs:

Are you shaped like an apple or a pear? If you carry your excess weight around your middle, you are shaped like an apple. If your extra weight is stored below your waist, in the abdomen and buttocks area, you are more like a pear. Those who fall into the apple group have

too much belly fat.

Is your waist size larger than your hip size? If you're a woman and your waist size is more than 35 inches around, or if you're a man and your waist size is more than 40 inches around, you may have too much belly fat. To measure your waist, take a tape measure and wrap it around your waist so that it crosses your navel. Keep the tape measure above your hip bones and don't suck in your stomach. Or, ask your healthcare provider to measure your waist for you.

Is your body mass index (BMI) too high? Many people with a high BMI tend to

have too much belly fat. You can figure out your BMI by using a BMI calculator on the Internet, or your provider can calculate it for you.

Your BMI tells you where your weight stands in relation to your height. A BMI between 25 and 29.9 puts you in the overweight group, and a BMI above 30 indicates obesity for most people.

