

## **Syndrome X**

### **What is this mysterious condition, and why should you be concerned about it?**

Syndrome X is a disorder that most people seriously risk developing by the time they reach middle age, if not before. Syndrome X can explain why you feel lousy today -- such as being tired and fuzzy minded. It can also age you faster than normal, setting the stage for catastrophic health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's, cancer, and other age-related diseases.

A syndrome is a condition defined by a cluster of related symptoms or disorders. In this case, Syndrome X refers specifically to a group of health problems that can include insulin resistance (the inability to properly deal with dietary carbohydrates and sugars), abnormal blood fats (such as elevated cholesterol and triglycerides), overweight, and high blood pressure.

Doctors have known for years that each of these health problems can increase the risk of other diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes. However, until relatively recently, they failed to connect the dots and see these health problems as part of a syndrome. We now know that eating large amounts of dietary carbohydrates (such as sweets, pastas, and breads) can raise cholesterol, triglyceride, and insulin levels. We know also that elevated insulin can promote obesity and high blood pressure. Because these problems are related and tend to occur in clusters, they form a syndrome.

X, of course, has always represented the unknown, whether it referred to hidden conspiracies in the X-Files television show or the unknown integer in algebra. Researchers added "X" when the syndrome was first recognized, but still largely unproved and mysterious. Today, Syndrome X is no longer a mystery. It is a frightfully common, and often ignored, disorder that can derail your health.

The good news is that it does not have to be. Syndrome X is primarily a nutritional disease caused by eating the wrong types of foods. You have the power to easily modify your lifestyle to protect yourself against Syndrome X

One of the problems people face in reversing insulin resistance and Syndrome X is perceptual: the long-held belief that food has relatively little to do with the development and progression of disease and the maintenance of health. We believe-and are supported with overwhelming scientific evidence-that the quality of our foods has a direct and fundamental bearing on the quality of our health, more so even than the genes that we inherit.

**Possibility;**

Syndrome X could be one of the largest disease epidemics to ever strike North America; because it is a disease caused by your body's inability to make the most of the food you eat.

The consequences will age you prematurely, making you feel older than you should. If you have this condition, you will also have a sharply increased risk of practically every age-related disorder, including obesity, hypertension, nervous system disorders, eye disease, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and Alzheimer's disease. In addition to physical symptoms, you may feel exhausted, spacey, depressed, irritable, or angry when you shouldn't be.

Doctors who recognize the underlying cause of this epidemic call it by one of several, often overlapping names: insulin resistance, metabolic syndrome, glucose intolerance, pre-diabetes, or Syndrome X. But few people have recognized the full scope of this disorder: it affects, to one degree or another, the majority of people.

If you are over the age of 35, you may be more familiar with some of the early signs and symptoms than the names of this condition: feeling sluggish, physically and mentally, after you eat and at many other times as well. Gaining a pound here and a pound there-and having increasing difficulty in losing them...also having your blood pressure creep up year and after year, also, finding that your cholesterol, triglycerides, and blood sugar levels are doing the same. These are all accepted signs of getting older, but they are all easily reversible.

Such symptoms indicate that something is fundamentally wrong with your health, and they have an "additive" effect, meaning that two or three of these symptoms (such as obesity plus high blood pressure) increase your risk of serious disease far more than just one symptom.

### **Syndrome X in a Nutshell**

The key underpinning of Syndrome X is insulin resistance-a diet-caused hormonal logjam that interferes with your body's ability to efficiently burn the food you eat. Syndrome X occurs when insulin resistance is combined with high levels of blood fats (cholesterol and triglyceride), too much body fat, and high blood pressure. Both insulin resistance and Syndrome X increase your risk of heart disease and diabetes-and many other serious, life-threatening diseases-because they impact, directly or indirectly, virtually every disease process.

Two of the key players in this life-and-death drama affecting you are substances regarded as absolutely essential for health: glucose (also known as blood sugar) and the hormone insulin. Because of the foods we, as a population, now eat, our bodies' levels of glucose and insulin have gone out of control. Quite simply, we are overdosing on glucose and

insulin-and both substances in high doses accelerate the aging of our bodies and encourage the development of disease.

Insulin resistance and Syndrome X are caused primarily by a diet high in refined carbohydrates, which probably include many of your favorite and frequently eaten foods, such as cereals, muffins, breads and rolls, pastas, cookies, donuts, and soft drinks. These refined carbohydrates not only raise glucose and insulin to unhealthy levels, but they also are devoid of the many vitamins, minerals, and vitamin-like nutrients our bodies need to properly utilize these foods.

In other words, nearly all of us have been eating a diet designed for disaster. We have been eating too many "bad" foods that set the stage for disease and not enough of the "good" foods that protect us. As a result, our health is being squeezed in the middle.

### **Nutrition is Your Best Medicine**

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