There’s a silent epidemic plaguing the Western world and it’s our lifestyle that drives it

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You could be at risk of developing metabolic syndrome if:

• A slight tyre has developed around your midriff that you can’t seem to shake, no matter how hard you try
• You feel constantly tired and more sluggish than you think you should be
• You constantly crave carbohydrates like pasta and white bread
• You find yourself hungry again half an hour after a large meal
• You can’t seem to get yourself to move from the couch
• You feel older than you are.

That’s a good chance that you’ve heard of metabolic syndrome in the media and, if the above describes you, you may be at risk right now. It’s also quite possible that you may have put these symptoms down to aging. Perhaps this motivates your body. Over time, your body begins to thicken. Not much at first and certainly not even more. You know you should start exercising, but it’s difficult and you tell yourself that, anyway, you don’t really have the time. Beguilingly, you might accept the extra weight and may think that no matter what you try, you just won’t shake it.

This scenario is driven by the number one symptom of metabolic syndrome: denial. Because it seeps up so slowly over the years, when it starts impacting your life, it’s easier to push it to the back of your mind and ignore it. The truth is, it remains in the back of your mind as a nagging concern. Every time you look in the mirror, you’re reminded of your situation. Living in a world driven by aesthetically pleasing advertising, you begin to feel like a failure, believing you have no willpower and must be weak.

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NOT A DISEASE

Metabolic syndrome isn’t a disease but a syndrome, or a combination of symptoms, each carrying a deadly potential. Often, an alternative name is used, the ‘deadly quartet’, which describes the four most serious symptoms:

• High blood pressure
• Elevated blood glucose and insulin resistance
• Low HDL (good cholesterol) and high LDL (bad cholesterol)
• Increased waist circumference.

You may wonder how an increased waist circumference is a deadly factor. Research shows that even a small amount of undetectable adipose fat will start the downhill cascade. In fact, the above quartet has been implicated in elevating C-reactive protein (a protein linked to inflammation), leading to an increased risk of blood clots that can cause artery blockade and strokes. The syndrome also increases the risk of diabetes and all its complications.

IT’S NOT YOUR FAULT

This condition takes a long time to manifest and its insidious effects can remain hidden for years. It’s our modern lifestyle that unfortunately allows this syndrome to get a toehold. We often take our meals on the run, following pleasing advertising, you may think you should be. It’s easier to push it to the back of your mind and ignore it. The truth is, it remains in the back of your mind as a nagging concern. Every time you look in the mirror, you’re reminded of your situation. Living in a world driven by aesthetically pleasing advertising, you begin to feel like a failure, believing you have no willpower and must be weak.

The ROAD TO METABOLIC RESCUE

Given the complex nature of metabolic syndrome, a multipronged approach is required to reverse its effects:

• Step 1 Follow a sensible approach to what you eat
Make it a habit to eat 5-6 smaller meals daily so that the carbohydrate load per meal is reduced, thereby helping you gain control of your sugar levels and reducing the negative effects of stress.

• Step 2  Make a commitment to start moving
Start by going for a leisurely 20 minute walk five times a week and then slowly build up the pace and stretch it to 30 minutes or more. If walking isn’t your thing, then try cycling, yoga, swimming or something that suits you. The point is to start moving.

• Step 3 Get your sugar under control
The following supplements will kickstart the rescue by helping you gain control of your sugar levels and reducing the negative effects of stress:
• Chromium (200-400mcg twice daily)
• Alpha lipoic acid (250mg twice daily)
• Gymnema sylvestre (200mg three times daily)
• Bitter melon (250mg twice daily)

The good news is the human body has a remarkable healing ability, but it’s up to you to make the first move.

References include: