

Cluster of heart risk factors tied to uterine cancer risk

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Excess weight likely a big factor, but other conditions also appear to matter.

(HealthDay)—A collection of health risk factors known as the "metabolic syndrome" may boost older women's risk of endometrial cancer, even if they're not overweight or obese, a new study suggests.

Metabolic syndrome refers to a group of health conditions occurring together that increase the risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes. These conditions include [high blood pressure](#), low levels of "good" HDL cholesterol, high levels of triglyceride fats, overweight and obesity, and high fasting blood sugar.

"We found that a diagnosis of [metabolic syndrome](#) was associated with higher risk of endometrial cancer, and that metabolic syndrome appeared to increase risk regardless of whether the woman was considered obese," Britton Trabert, an investigator in the division of [cancer epidemiology](#) and genetics at the U.S. National Cancer Institute, said in an American Association for Cancer Research news release.

The study's design only allowed the investigators to find an association between metabolic syndrome and endometrial cancer risk. The researchers

couldn't prove whether or not metabolic syndrome directly causes this cancer of the uterine lining.

For the study, the researchers reviewed information on more than 16,300 American women diagnosed with endometrial cancer between 1993 and 2007. The study authors compared those women to more than 100,000 women without endometrial cancer.

Overall, metabolic syndrome was associated with a 39 percent to 103 percent increased risk of endometrial cancer in women 65 and older, according to the study. The reason for the variation in risk is that health groups have different definitions for metabolic syndrome.

Being overweight is a known risk factor for endometrial cancer. But, even after the researchers accounted for excess weight, metabolic syndrome was still linked to up to a 21 percent increased risk.

The authors also said that each condition that contributes to metabolic syndrome was independently associated with increased risk for endometrial [cancer](#).

The study was published online Jan. 13 in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*.

"Although our study was not designed to evaluate the potential impact of preventing metabolic syndrome on [endometrial cancer](#) incidence, weight loss and exercise are the most effective steps a woman can take to prevent developing metabolic syndrome," Trabert added.

Nearly one-quarter of Americans without diabetes has metabolic syndrome, the researchers said.

More information: "Metabolic Syndrome and Risk of Endometrial Cancer in the United States: A Study in the SEER–Medicare Linked Database." *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev* January 2015 24:261-267; doi:10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-14-0923

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