

Are waistbands the new 'vital sign' along with BMI to check your health?

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Healthcare professionals should routinely measure waist circumference, alongside body mass index (BMI) to properly assess and manage obesity-related health risk, write Robert Ross and 16 colleagues in a Consensus

Statement in *Nature Reviews Endocrinology*. They argue that decreases in waist circumference are a critically important treatment target for reducing potential health risks.

Despite decades of research indicating that measuring [waist circumference](#) in conjunction with BMI can improve efforts to manage cardiometabolic risk in patients, this measurement is not routinely obtained in clinical practice.

Ross and co-authors summarize the evidence that BMI alone is not sufficient to evaluate cardiometabolic risk associated with obesity. For example, although many individuals with overweight or obesity develop cardiometabolic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes mellitus and cardiovascular disease, others remain metabolically healthy. However, among adults, the prevalence of metabolically healthy obesity varies greatly due to differences in age, ethnicity and environmental factors.

Waist circumference, a simple measure of abdominal adiposity, should be considered alongside BMI as an important vital sign to classify obesity, the authors argue. They report that clinically relevant reductions in waist circumference can be achieved by lifestyle interventions, and call for health practitioners to be trained to properly measure waist circumference.

More information: Robert Ross et al. Waist circumference as a vital sign in clinical practice: a Consensus Statement from the IAS and ICCR Working Group on Visceral Obesity, *Nature Reviews Endocrinology* (2020). [DOI: 10.1038/s41574-019-0310-7](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41574-019-0310-7)

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