

# The Power of Knowing Now



Health Matters

By Kerry Sauser

How many times have you looked back on a situation and realized that a different choice early on would have changed the outcome of a situation? Fall chores may have some of us thinking things like "If I knew that tree would get so big and drop leaves in the gutter, I wouldn't have planted it so close to the house." Planning ahead does have its benefits.

The health field has alerted us to a growing medical concern that falls into that "plan ahead" category. It's called Cardiometabolic Syndrome, and knowing about it and dealing with now will help you live a longer, happier and more active life.

Cardiometabolic Syndrome (CMS) is a combination of medical disorders that increase the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and diabetes when symptoms occur together. It affects nearly 25% of people in the United States, and prevalence is growing. Statistics from the Center for Disease Control on diabetes and heart disease confirm the serious consequences of the CMS trend. Today, 1 in 3 Americans are expected to develop diabetes in their lifetime, and heart disease is the #1 killer for both men and women in our country. CMS may also set the stage for a number of other chronic illnesses, including dementia and forms of cancer. Illnesses such as diabe-

tes and cardiovascular disease progress and develop over time—usually decades—and many factors contribute. CMS is actually the progression between health and illness, and it indicates one is on the road to more serious conditions. Think of CMS as the trunk of a tree, and specific illnesses like cardiovascular disease and diabetes the branches. Disease branches develop from and are fed by the CMS trunk. What feeds the trunk and keeps the tree thriving? Well the roots of course. The great news about the CMS tree is that we have direct control over many of the roots—and therefore our life trend toward health or disease.

So what makes up the "trunk" of the CMS disease tree? Most health care practitioners agree that age, body fat, blood sugar handling abilities, blood lipids (HDL, LDL, VLDL - cholesterol and triglycerides) and high blood pressure are the determining conditions of CMS. Having all the conditions below may indicate Cardio-Metabolic Syndrome:

Waist circumference >34.6 inches (women) or >40.2 inches (men)

Fasting Blood Glucose >100 mg/dL

Elevated Triglycerides >150 mg/dL

Reduced HDL <50 mg/dL (women) or <40 mg/dL (men)

High blood pressure (systolic >130, diastolic >85)

There was a time when the conventional approach was to "watch and wait". Until a condition was diagnosed, aggressive actions was not taken and then disease management was the only option for patients. Fortunately, practitioners now have the ability to examine the traditional risk factors (age and tests for Total Cholesterol, Triglycerides, Glucose, HbA1c, and blood pressure), plus em-

ploy new testing and analysis tools to determine where a patient falls on the CMS progression. The new tests analyze complex metabolic processes in the body that lead to CMS, and help patients focus on very specific concerns early, when minor adjustments can have major success. Valuable new test panels include:

**Insulin Resistance/Diabetes Risk.** Biomarkers in fasting blood serum are measured to determine the relative insulin resistance stage of an individual. This test can be effective decades before abnormalities would register on traditional tests, and helps practitioners prioritize insulin sensitizing recommendations.

**Atherogenic Lipids.** This is a much more detailed look at the lipids (fats) in the blood. Particle size, particle number, homocysteine and C-reactive protein (an inflammation marker) impact cardiovascular risk and are some of the indicators examined alone and relative to each other to determine care suggestions.

Remember the roots of the CMS tree? Unfortunately, our modern life includes many negative health trends that make the roots of the disease tree grow. Increased caloric intake of refined and processed food makes us overweight and deficient in important micronutrients. Sedentary lifestyles reduce our fitness. Changes in working patterns, sleep and social demands add demands on the body's stress response mechanisms. Environmental toxins burden our detoxification systems, leading to sensitivities and syndromes unknown to previous generations. And though it can seem overwhelming, the great news is that we do control enough of these "roots" to slow or reverse CMS!

With Cardiometabolic Syndrome, the empowering

link between lifestyle and health is indisputable. Simple changes in diet, activity levels and stress management have HUGE impacts on our health and can slow or reverse this growing epidemic and keep us vital and healthy. Try a few of these suggestions to slow the progression of CMS and other diseases...

**Determine your CMS risk.** If you have family history of diabetes or heart disease, you may want to consider some of the new generation tests to determine a preemptive wellness strategy.

**Avoid processed foods and Eat a Mediterranean-type diet.** Start with a meal or two a week that includes fish and focuses on plenty of leafy green and brightly colored vegetables to improve insulin sensitivity and reduce inflammation.

**Exercise.** Physical activity and exercise are key to lowering blood pressure, reducing abdominal fat, improving blood lipids (cholesterol), improving glucose management and extending your active life expectancy. Start with 10 minutes of moderate walking daily, and add 10 minute segments until you get to 30. Remember, ANY movement is better than none!

**Manage stress.** There is a strong relationship between stress and cardiometabolic risk. Stress may be unavoidable, so make sure you stay in condition to counteract it. Get plenty of sleep, keep your relationships happy, and give yourself time to relax—Even 15 minutes of quiet time a day can rejuvenate you.

**Plan ahead this fall to keep your Family Tree healthy for years to come—and give the disease tree of CardioMetabolic Syndrome a good pruning!**

Until next month...Heal well, be well...naturally!  
K.S.