

## **Eat right and exercise for sex**

Would you be more likely to cut down on sweet treats, lose weight, and exercise if you thought it would improve your sex life? Sure we know that if we eat right and exercise, our chance of a heart attack will be lower but researchers at the University of California San Diego have found that we just might have sex more often too! Too much bad HDL cholesterol, triglycerides, and high glucose along with high blood pressure and obesity around the middle otherwise known as metabolic syndrome increase our risk of heart disease. Turns out that metabolic syndrome is also associated with low sexual desire and less sex.

Older women living in Rancho Bernardo, California answered a sex questionnaire called the Female Sexual Function Index. In a past study from this group, older age was linked to less sex but greater satisfaction. This report also included blood pressure, waist measurement, blood sugar, HDL cholesterol, and triglycerides which are parts of the metabolic syndrome that can lead to more heart disease. Women that met the criteria for metabolic syndrome reported low sexual desire, low sexual satisfaction and had less sex.

All of the women had gone through menopause and ranged in age from 64 to 82. Over half had never smoked. On average they were at the upper limit of normal for weight but were not obese. About 3 out of 4 had high blood pressure and about 3 out of 4 had prediabetes/diabetes.

When each part of metabolic syndrome was studied alone, the results varied. High blood pressure was linked to less sex. Diabetes but not prediabetes was linked to less sex suggesting that if you watch your carbs and exercise to prevent prediabetes from turning into diabetes, you might also preserve your sex life. Waist measurement, cholesterol, and triglycerides were not linked to less sex.

Desire was measured using two questions on a scale from 1 to 5 that asked how often you felt sexual desire or interest and how high or low would you rate your degree of sexual desire or interest. High triglycerides, prediabetes, and diabetes were linked to low desire.

Those women with metabolic syndrome who did have sex had more problems with desire, arousal, orgasm, and satisfaction than those who did not have metabolic syndrome.

The greater number of criteria for metabolic syndrome that a woman met the greater the chance that she would have less desire, less sex, or less satisfaction. So keep yourself healthy. Not only will this decrease your risk of heart disease but it just may keep a good sex life going too!

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## Publication

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