

The naturopathic advisor



Naturally Good Health has teamed up with experts from the College of Naturopathic Medicine to answer some of your burning health questions. This issue, you asked:



Q Is fat around my tummy really so bad for my health?

Fat around the middle – commonly known as the beer belly – is the fat that surrounds vital organs in the abdominal area.

Carrying excess pounds in your midsection is serious. Abdominal visceral fat is more

metabolically active than subcutaneous fat as it produces hormones and other substances that can adversely affect your health, hence being the most dangerous type of fat. It is of particular concern as it's a key player on a variety of health problems, including an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes.

The good news is abdominal fat responds very well to diet changes and exercise, especially in individuals with a lot of weight to lose. A health publication from Harvard Medical School stated that a starting point for bringing weight under control and combating abdominal fat is regular moderate-intensity physical activity. This would be at least 30 minutes and up to 60 minutes of exercise per day. A combination of cardiovascular exercise and strength training, which target most muscle groups, is the best approach. Exercising only a particular muscle group, such as

stomach muscles in sit-ups, will strengthen the muscles but will not get rid of abdominal fat.

From a diet point of view, emphasise fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, nuts, seeds, beans, lentils and low-fat dairy products. Avoid sugar, including sugary drinks, simple carbohydrates (for example, white bread) and processed food products. Replace saturated and trans fats with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats such as olive oil and avocados. Include food rich in omega 3 fatty acids such as oily fish (salmon, sardines and mackerel), walnuts and ground flax seeds.



Your expert

Your question has been answered by Dublin-based CNM graduate, Naturopathic Nutritionist and Lecturer, Karla Bohan. Karla specialises in weight management and sports nutrition. If you would like to find out how you can train at CNM for an exciting new career in Naturopathic Nutrition, Herbal Medicine or Acupuncture, join us at our next free open evening. Reserve your free place online at www.naturopathy.ie. College locations: Dublin, Cork and Galway.