

# August Wellness Newsletter

## The TRUTH about FAT



For most of us, body fat has a bad reputation. From the dimply stuff that plagues women's thighs to the beer bellies that can pop out in middle-aged men, fat is typically something we agonize over, scorn and try to exercise away. But for scientists, fat is intriguing and becoming more so every day. After reading this article, you will know the good and bad about fat, which is worse - belly fat or thigh fat, and that fat has more functions in our body than originally thought!

Fat has two main purposes: it stores excess calories in a safe way so you can mobilize the fat stores when you're hungry and fat releases hormones that control metabolism. There are various types of fat - brown, white, subcutaneous, visceral and belly fat.

### **BROWN FAT**

Brown fat has gotten a lot of buzz recently with the discovery that it's not the mostly worthless fat scientists had thought. In recent studies, it has been found that lean people tend to have more brown fat than overweight or obese people and, when stimulated, it can burn calories. Scientists are eyeing it as a potential obesity treatment if they can figure out a way to increase a person's brown fat or stimulate existing brown fat. Children have more brown fat than adults, it is what helps them keep warm. Brown fat stores decline in adults but still help with warmth. Brown fat is now thought to be more like muscle than like white fat and when activated, brown fat burns white fat.

### **WHITE FAT**

White fat is much more plentiful than brown fat. The job of white fat is to store energy and produce hormones that are then secreted into the bloodstream. Small fat cells produce a "good guy" hormone called adiponectin, which makes the liver and muscles sensitive to the hormone insulin, making us less susceptible to diabetes and heart disease. When people become fat, the production of adiponectin slows down or shuts down, setting them up for disease.

### **SUBCUTANEOUS FAT**

Subcutaneous fat is found directly under the skin. It is the fat that is measured using skin-fold calipers to estimate your total body fat. In terms of overall health, subcutaneous fat in the thighs and buttocks may not be as bad and may have some potential benefits, unlike other types of fat, specifically the deeper, visceral fat. The danger of big bellies lies not only in the subcutaneous fat but also the deep visceral fat.

### **VISCERAL FAT**

Visceral, or "deep"fat, wraps around the inner organs and spells trouble for your health. How do you know if you have it? A large waist or belly is a good indication. This type of fat drives up your risk for diabetes, heart disease, stroke and even dementia. Studies have shown that leptin, a hormone released by the belly fat, may have some adverse effect on the brain. Leptin plays a role in appetite regulation and in learning and memory. Visceral fat is also thought to play a larger role in insulin resistance, which is

why visceral fat is a health risk.

### **BELLY FAT**

Belly fat has gotten a mostly deserved reputation as unhealthy fat. Belly fat is both visceral and subcutaneous and can only be determined as such by a CT scan. Belly fat is viewed as a bigger health risk than hip or thigh fat. Abdominal fat has a worse effect on insulin resistance and blood lipids and boost the risk of diabetes, heart and stroke risks.

### **THIGH & BUTTOCKS FAT**

While men tend to accumulate belly fat, it is no secret women, especially if pear-shaped, accumulate fat in their thighs and buttocks. It has been found that pear-shaped women tend to deposit more fat in their abdomen, which becomes worse and more noticeable through menopause.

So when you lose fat, what kind of fat(s) are you losing? The answer: **white fat**. If you exercise plus diet, you will tend to lose slightly more visceral fat from your belly.

We take greta pride in staying on the leading edge of our industry and sharing our knowledge with our clients and friends. Please contact us with any questions or concerns, toll free 866.203.8333.

Sincerely,

*Silicon Benefits, Inc.*