

Menopause causes 'spare tyre' but no weight gain

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Contrary to popular perception, menopause does not cause weight gain, although it does increase fat around the waist, a specialist journal reported Tuesday.

Scientists working for the International [Menopause](#) Society carried out a review of the evidence, looking at published studies into the impact of menopause on body weight.

Where weight gain occurred, it did not occur through hormonal factors, which means that menopause cannot be blamed, they found.

However, they concluded that the loss of the female hormone oestrogen leads to a change in the pattern of body fat, which shifts from the hips to the abdomen.

"It is a myth that the menopause causes a woman to gain weight," said lead investigator Susan Davis, a professor at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia.

"It's really just a consequence of [environmental factors](#) and ageing which cause that. But there is no doubt that the new spare tyre many women complain of after menopause is real," she said.

"This is the body's response to the fall in oestrogen at menopause—a shift of fat storage from the hips to the waist."

Previous research has found that on average a woman in Western society gains around 0.5 kilos (1.1 pounds) per year after the age of 50. [Weight gain](#) is influenced by genetic and [behavioural factors](#), especially a [sedentary lifestyle](#) and snacking on fatty and [sugary foods](#).

"What this translates to in real terms is that women going through the menopause should begin to try to control their weight before it becomes a problem, so if you have not been looking after yourself before the menopause, you should certainly start to do so when it arrives," Davis said in a press release.

"This means for all women being thoughtful about what you eat, and for many being more active every day."

The study, published ahead of World Menopause Day on Thursday, appears in the society's journal, Climacteric.

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