

Belly fat gain during menopause may elevate CVD risk

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(HealthDay)—Women experience an accelerated increase in visceral

adipose tissue (VAT) starting two years before menopause, which is associated with a greater risk for subclinical atherosclerosis in the internal carotid artery, according to a study published online March 1 in *Menopause*.

Saad Samargandy, Ph.D., from University of Pittsburgh, and colleagues assessed the abdominal VAT trajectory during the [menopause](#) transition and evaluated whether menopause-related VAT accumulation is associated with greater average common [carotid](#) artery intima-media thickness (cIMT) or internal carotid artery intima-media thickness (ICA-IMT). The analysis included 362 [women](#) (baseline mean age, 51.1 years; 61 percent White).

The researchers found that VAT increased significantly by 8.2 percent per year from two years before to the final menstrual period (FMP) and 5.8 percent per year after FMP. There were no significant changes seen in VAT more than two years before FMP. From two years before to FMP, VAT predicted greater ICA-IMT, with a 20 percent greater VAT associated with a 2.0 percent greater ICA-IMT. However, in an adjusted [analysis](#), VAT was not an independent predictor of ICA-IMT in other time periods or of other cIMT measures.

"Through this long-running study, we've found a clear link between growth in abdominal fat and risk of cardiovascular disease that can be tracked with a measuring tape but could be missed by calculating body mass index," a coauthor said in a statement. "If you can identify women at risk, you can help them modify their lifestyle and diet early to hopefully lower that risk."

More information: [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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