



by Director of Fitness, Robin Weiss

## **Our Health and Waist Size Connection**

How big is your waist? The answer might tell you more than anything else about your health – in particular, your risk of heart attack, cancer, and diabetes. In fact, your waist measurement will tell you more than your body mass index (BMI = weight relative to height).

According to recent research, including a study published in March 2008 in the *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, it's not how heavy you are, but how big you are around the middle that predicts health risks. As females, our risks of high blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol begin to edge up if our waist is bigger than 31.5 inches and get a lot higher if our waist is more than 35 inches. For men, risks are highest when waist size is 40 inches or greater.

The reason for this health and waist size connection is that a large waist indicates that you're likely to have fat around your heart, liver, and even your muscles. These are all signs of potential health problems. Current research strongly suggests that losing pounds is the only way to turn things around. A study published in the May 2008 issue of *Obesity*, showed that getting the weight off makes a significant difference. A 23% decrease in waist size translated, on average, to a 32 % decline in fat around the heart.

Reference: DrWeil.com 2008