

be
well.

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Minding Your Metabolism

Your metabolism changes as you get older. You burn fewer calories and break down foods differently. Unless you exercise more and adjust your diet, the pounds can add up. Middle-age spread can quickly become middle-age sprawl.

One key player in age-related changes is a chemical called leptin, which helps your brain tell you to stop eating. Leptin signals don't work as well as you get older, so you might continue to feel hungry even after you've eaten. Obesity makes leptin even less effective.

Both aging and obesity can also bring changes to the way your body processes glucose, the sugar your body makes from food and uses for energy. These changes can lead to diabetes, which raises your risk for heart disease, blindness, amputations, and other conditions.

Over the long term, even our brains are affected. Emerging evidence suggests that long-standing diabetes and obesity can lead to changes in brain cells which make them vulnerable to aging.

Exercise and moving are also important. Be sure to talk with your healthcare provider about safe ways to adjust your activity patterns as you get older. Work together to choose activities which are best for you.

Focusing on physical activity and healthy eating are the keys to avoiding middle-age spread and the health problems which can come with it.



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