

The truth about beer belly fat

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*Beer drinkers around the world tend to be a part of the not-so-cute-n-cuddly **beer belly** band wagon. A common problem among the young and old alike, beer belly is a cause of sedentary lifestyles and, contrary to popular belief, isn't always to do with beer.*

The good news is that it can be cured and the bad news is that even teetotalers might have a beer belly. Know why? We have Mukta Vasishta, Senior Dietician at Sir Gangaram Hospital, New Delhi and Sunita Roy

Chowdhary, Senior Dietician at Rockland Hospital, New Delhi decoding the truth about beer belly fat for us today.

What causes the dreaded beer belly?

Mukta Vasishta. A beer belly is caused by excess calorie intake and reduced calorie expenditure because of a sedentary lifestyle.

Sunita Roy Chowdhary. Consumption of excess **calories** (overeating or over-drinking) and having a sedentary lifestyle is the main cause of this kind of obesity. It can also be due to cushing's syndrome (it is a health condition which stems from long-standing contact of the body's tissues to high levels of the hormone cortisol) and certain drugs can also be the cause.

Can people with a beer belly be considered obese?

Mukta Vasishta. People with beer belly are not healthy. On the contrary the visceral fat (fat that lies deep inside the abdomen surrounding vital organs) deposited leads to secretion of cytokines which cause chronic inflammation and disease. People with beer belly are considered obese only if body mass index (a measure of body fatness) is more than 24.9 kg/m.

Sunita Roy Chowdhary. People with abdominal fat deposition are considered obese if the waist circumference is more than 102 cm (40inches) in men and more than 88 cm (35 inches) in women.

What are the prevention and treatment of beer belly? Is liposuction a safe and only method to get rid of it?

Mukta Vasishta. Prevention and treatment of beer belly involves:

- Losing weight.
- De-stressing by meditation and breathing [exercise](#).
- Drinking plenty of water to flush out salt from the tissues so as to feel lighter and not bloated.
- Eating a proper [diet](#) by including anti-inflammatory foods like oats, wheat bran, brown rice, green vegetables, [fruits](#), [green tea](#), nuts, fish etc and avoid inflammatory foods like refined cereals, sweets, fried foods etc.

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- Liposuction removes subcutaneous fat and not the visceral fat because it is too close to the internal organs which would make it unsafe.

Sunita Roy Chowdhary. For the prevention and treatment of obesity one needs to have a healthy balanced diet with a regular exercise routine. One should not over eat. Eat a

healthy balanced diet of three main meals along with two high fiber snacks in between every day. 30 minutes of exercise each day is enough to keep one in shape.

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