Understanding Metabolic Syndrome: A Fact Sheet for Patients

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What is Metabolic Syndrome?

Metabolic syndrome is a combination of health issues that together increase your risk of serious diseases like heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes. The key elements of metabolic syndrome include:

- Increased fat around the waist.

- High blood sugar levels.

- High levels of triglycerides (a type of fat) in the blood.

- Low levels of good cholesterol (HDL) in the blood.

- High blood pressure.

Why Am I Being Monitored for Metabolic Syndrome?

If you are taking antipsychotic medications, it's important to monitor for metabolic syndrome because these medicines can increase the risk of developing these conditions. This is a requirement for all inpatient psychiatric units. It's crucial to catch these changes early, as addressing them can prevent bigger health problems in the future.

What Can I Do About It?

If you are diagnosed with metabolic syndrome or are at risk, here are some steps you can take:

1. **Educate Yourself**: Understand what metabolic syndrome is and how it can affect your health. This fact sheet is a great starting point.

2. **Discuss with Your Primary Care Doctor**: Always share your health concerns and any changes you've noticed with your primary care physician.

3. **Eat Healthily**: Meet with a nutritionist or dietitian who can give you tips on eating a balanced diet. This may include:

   - Reducing salt and sugary foods.

   - Eating more lean proteins like chicken, fish, and beans.

   - Choosing healthy fats like olive oil and avocados.

   - Increasing fiber in your diet.

4. **Stay Active**: Engage in physical activities, even if it's just walking. Every bit helps!

5. **Medication Changes**: Discuss with your psychiatrist if there's an option to switch to a medication with a lower risk of metabolic syndrome.

6. **Treat Metabolic Syndrome**: There are medications available that can help manage the symptoms. Always consult with your doctor before making any changes to your medications.

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