

# Struggling with Stubborn Belly Fat?

BY REBECCA BISSET

Did you know that stress can cause the belly to look larger? I know that when I'm stressed, mine immediately starts to look rounder. The problem is that you can then get annoyed with it and inadvertently hold on to it for longer!

According to DR IVAN PUAH, Medical Director at Amaris B. Clinic, "higher stress levels, in general, can lead to excess fat around the abdominal organs – sometimes known as a 'stress belly'." He adds that this is often the hardest type of fat to get rid of.

Research says that stress can also lead to decreased fat oxidation, which allows fat to be burnt as energy. This means you don't necessarily have to consume more food or burn less energy to put weight on.

## 4 different belly types

There are other causes of having a bigger belly than you might like; perhaps you have a post-baby tummy that's taking much longer than you thought it would to shift; or maybe a few too many alcoholic drinks are causing bloating and weight gain in that area.

### #1 Stress belly

If you're stressed, you'll have higher levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, which gets the body to store fat. If your body stores more in the abdomen, this area is usually the hardest to eliminate. As we've mentioned, stress can also cause a decrease in fat oxidation – how fat is burnt as energy. So you might find that you're not eating much, but the fat still isn't going away!

### #2 Mummy belly

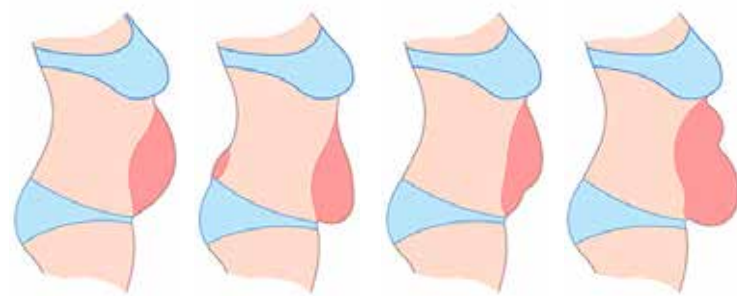
It's normal not to go straight back to the body you had before, but it can be annoying – especially not being able to fit into your clothes! A "mummy tummy" describes a tummy that is flabby with two areas of fat on either side of your belly button.

### #3 Alcohol belly

Too much booze, especially beer, can block the body from breaking food down properly or your liver's ability to burn fat. Some ingredients in alcohol and processed foods can affect the balance of good and bad bacteria and cause bloating and increased fat production.

### #4 Hormonal belly

Hormone levels can affect your fat-burning efficiency too. Higher oestrogen causes us to hold the fat in all areas, while low oestrogen levels shift the fat-holding area from the hips and thighs to the abdomen. Higher testosterone increases fat around the waist and thighs. In men, low testosterone slows the metabolism and increases belly fat.



Alcohol Belly

Hormonal Belly

Stressed Belly

Mummy Belly



## What is stubborn fat and what makes it so stubborn?

When we talk about stubborn fat, it refers to those areas that are difficult to lose through diet and regular exercise. Apparently, stubborn fat is more resistant to fat burning because it acts as an energy storage. Our body holds on to this energy psychologically and physiologically for preservation.

## 2 different types of belly fat

Not only are there different belly types that arise for different reasons, there are also different types of fat in those bellies. Dr Puah talks us through them.

### #1 Visceral fat

Visceral fat is fat stored inside the belly, wrapped around the organs and beneath the firm abdominal wall. It holds fatty acids and inflammatory proteins amongst other substances that are absorbed by the liver. If this liver fat is high, it can cause insulin resistance and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

### #2 Subcutaneous fat

While subcutaneous belly fat doesn't seem to have the risk factor that visceral fat does, overall high belly and body fat does; so it's still important to keep overall belly fat low. Subcutaneous fat is the squishy stuff just below the skin; it makes up about 90 percent of our overall body fat. We only start burning this type of fat after visceral fat is used for energy. It's harder to lose and usually collects around the stomach, thighs, hips and bottom.

## 3 types of liposuction for getting rid of belly fat

### #1 Laserlipolysis

Laserlipolysis is a minimally invasive laser-assisted liposuction that breaks down the fat cells into liquified fat, which is then removed through suction. Apart from melting fat, laser energy also stimulates collagen production via tissue coagulation.

### #2 Vaser liposuction

Vaser liposuction uses ultrasonic high-frequency vibrations to loosen, break down and melt the fat cells, which are then removed using a liposuction cannula. This technique leaves the surrounding connective tissues relatively undisturbed.

### #3 Modern liposuction with MDC-Sculpt Lipo Technique

Dr Puah describes liposuction as 70 percent art and 30 percent science. His experience with body-shaping has led him to successfully develop the MDC-Sculpt Lipo Technique. MDC stands for Multi-Dimensional Contouring, and his proprietary approach has a three-pronged objective: fat removal, targeted body sculpting and skin tightening, with sculptured and natural-looking results. Plus, it's gentler and has a faster recovery time with less bruising, discomfort and scarring.



Liposuction also has other health and medical benefits, such as a reduction of triglycerides (a type of fat found in your blood) by up to 25 percent, and a reduction in the total count of leucocytes (white blood cells). It also leads to fat loss without causing

any change in lean mass. A systemic 2017 review showed that liposuction improved metabolic balance and cardiovascular risk factors, too – and it can reduce vascular inflammation in obese patients, reducing their cardiovascular risk.

So, if you're unhappy with the shape of your tummy or any part of your body, schedule a consultation and see what's the best option for you. It can affect our confidence and our mood – plus, it's pretty frustrating when you think you're doing what you can to reduce it, and nothing is happening. [a](#)

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