

Chapter 1

Taking Control of Your Waistline and Your Health

In This Chapter

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 - ▶ Checking out your weight and waist circumference
 - ▶ Taking control of your health and waistline with the Belly Fat Diet plan
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The next time you're in a public place, look around. What do you see? Almost everywhere you look you can see expanding waistlines and bellies protruding over belts. In fact, it's harder to spot a person at a healthy body weight than it is to find one who isn't. The United States is in the midst of a very real and very dangerous epidemic. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, 63 percent of Americans over the age of 20 are now obese, and another 127 million people are considered overweight. That's the majority of the country! And since 1980, the prevalence of obesity in children and teens has tripled! The scariest part is that so many people are now overweight that it almost appears normal and can be difficult to tell what a truly healthy body weight even is.

The excess weight that these people have is only half the battle, however. When folks are overweight and obese, they often have an increased amount of visceral fat, or belly fat, deep inside their abdominal walls. This fat is extremely dangerous to their health. In this chapter, I help you understand belly fat and get you on the right path to losing fat and weight the healthy (and permanent!) way.

Exploring the Dangers of Belly Fat

The concern about being overweight or obese isn't just about looks. Sure everyone wants to look great in a bathing suit, but your health is more

important. Being just slightly overweight significantly increases your risk for disease and premature death. And where you hold your excess weight matters even more. Even if you're at a relatively healthy body weight, holding excess fat in your abdominal area causes you to have an increased waistline and thus be at a much greater risk of health complications. So much so, in fact, that a comprehensive European study found that every 2-inch increase in your waistline increased mortality by 13 percent in women and as much as 17 percent in men.

The most dangerous fat of all is visceral fat, which is often referred to as *belly fat*. This fat is different from the subcutaneous fat that you can see on your body and pinch between your fingers. Visceral fat is the layer of fat deep inside your body that forms between your organs. Even though you can't see it, you know it's there if you have an increased amount of subcutaneous fat.

The more visceral fat you have, the more toxic it is to your body. Visceral fat is so toxic that research has linked it to everything from an increased risk of heart disease, metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes, and gallstones to increases in certain cancers and dementia. In Chapter 2, I break down exactly what visceral, or belly, fat is, what causes it, and the health implications it can cause. And throughout this book, I explain how to make simple changes to banish belly fat from your body so you can look great and feel great as well!

The weight loss and diet industry is a billion-dollar industry. People of all ages and from all economic backgrounds shell out hundreds and thousands of dollars for "quick fixes" to lose weight and belly fat. But as obesity rates continue to skyrocket, it's clear that these quick fixes don't work.

Thankfully, a simple and effective solution to permanently lose weight and belly fat is just waiting for you. It's called the *Belly Fat Diet*. Throughout this book, I help you discover exactly what contributed to your weight gain and belly fat and provide you with an individualized program that works quickly and easily to provide you with dramatic and permanent weight loss results. If you're ready to take control of your health and waistline once and for all, the Belly Fat Diet is your answer!

Analyzing Your Weight and Waistline

Belly fat is some pretty scary stuff, so you need to identify whether you're at risk. Then you have to determine what you can do to decrease your belly fat as much as possible. Your risk isn't just determined by your weight, however. It's important to keep the size of your waistline in mind, too. Even if you're at a healthy body weight, you may still have too much belly fat.

A recent study by Statistics Canada found that 21 percent of women considered to be at a normal weight were at an increased risk of health complications due to their levels of abdominal fat. So even though your weight on the scale

may look okay, you may still be at risk of health conditions brought on by excess belly fat.



Waist circumference is a key measurement that many individuals don't focus on. The research on the health risks associated with abdominal fat is so compelling that it may be time to focus less on the number on the scale and more on the measurement of your waistline.

In Chapter 3, I show you the simple ways you can determine whether you're at risk for having too much belly fat. I show you how to determine your body mass index (BMI) as well as your waist circumference and waist-to-hip ratio so you can see what your belly fat risk is and how to address it. (Your waist-to-hip ratio correlates with increased risk of heart attacks, so it's an important number to know.) I also show you what an ideal waist measurement is for you and your body type so you know when you've reached your goal.



No two bellies are exactly the same. Many different causes of belly fat exist, so you need to determine the cause of your belly fat so you can work on decreasing it and preventing it from returning. In Chapter 3, I outline various body types and how they store belly fat so you can determine your type and what you need to do to lose inches and pounds.

Getting Started on the Path to a Flat Belly

After you've determined whether you have excess belly fat and what exactly brought it on, you're ready to start making changes to banish your belly for good and feel great from the inside out! In Chapter 4, I outline exactly how the Belly Fat Diet plan works, and more specifically, how it works for your individual body. I also help you understand exactly how the Belly Fat Diet plan blasts belly fat, improves health, and helps increase your energy level.

The first thing you need to do to be successful with your Belly Fat Diet plan is to prepare yourself ahead of time. You can't be successful with a weight loss program unless you plan ahead. If you're starting to feel overwhelmed, take a deep breath. Chapter 5 walks you through everything you need to do to be fully prepared to start your Belly Fat Diet plan. I break down the steps you need to take to be successful, including dietary and lifestyle changes. For instance, you can transition to whole grains, manage your stress, and get adequate sleep. Both your diet and your lifestyle play important roles in managing your belly fat.

In this section, I explain the basic principles of the Belly Fat Diet plan. I show you how this plan specifically targets belly fat, promoting weight loss, decreasing disease risk, and improving how you look and feel.



Throughout this book, I stress that your Belly Fat Diet plan isn't a diet that you go on and off. Instead, it's a lifestyle change. If you make quick, dramatic changes and then go right back to your old behaviors after a few weeks or months, you'll pack on the pounds all over again. Instead, I show you how to make gradual, practical, and doable lifestyle changes that you can implement for life.

Choosing a plan

As I mention earlier, no two bellies are exactly alike. So the same program to reduce belly fat and body weight won't work for everyone. I have designed three individualized programs in the Belly Fat Diet so you can follow the one that works best for you and helps you achieve your ultimate health and weight loss goals. These individualized programs make the Belly Fat Diet unique. The three plans you can choose from include the following:

- ✓ **The Turbo-Charged plan:** This plan is perfect for the person who wants quick and permanent results. It's also great for the person who has seen few or no results from prior failed dieting attempts. I like to call these folks "resistant dieters." It's the strictest of the meal plans, but it also provides you with the most rapid results.
- ✓ **The Moderation plan:** This plan is designed for the individual who wants consistent, steady weight loss without feeling terribly deprived. It provides a great balance of healthy nutrients that help you feel satisfied while shedding those unwanted pounds.
- ✓ **The Gradual-Change plan:** This plan works best for the individual who's at a healthy body weight but has a waist circumference that indicates a risk for health conditions associated with excess abdominal fat. It's also ideal for those who don't want to go headlong into weight loss or who have medical conditions that require them to lose weight more slowly. The Gradual-Change plan allows you to make small changes over time that lead to big results.

Chapter 7 outlines these plans in detail and provides tips on planning and preparing for your plan. Chapter 8 provides menus for each of the plans.

Getting some exercise

After you determine which Belly Fat Diet plan is most approximate for your situation, you need to start considering the best exercises to burn up belly fat. The truth is that you can lose belly fat and body weight through dietary changes alone. However, even when you're at an ideal body weight and have achieved an ideal waist circumference, exercise is still vital to your health. So regardless of whether you want to lose weight, you still need to add physical activity to your daily routine.

The Belly Fat Diet workout plan isn't difficult. You don't need any fancy equipment, and you don't have to join a gym. You just have to commit to putting a few minutes aside a few times a week to get active. In addition to the health benefits, getting active and staying active (in addition to following your Belly Fat Diet plan) will have you achieving your flat belly results quicker than you ever thought possible! And if you need more motivation, think of this: Multiple studies have shown that even without dietary changes, individuals who moderately exercise a few times per week showed significant losses in visceral fat.

The belly-blasting exercises outlined in Chapter 10 target belly fat, burning it up and toning your midsection for a sleeker, slimmer you. And I provide exercises for everyone. If you've never exercised before, the Phase 1 exercises can help you strengthen your midsection and reveal muscles you didn't even know you had. If you're an avid exerciser, the Phase 2 exercises challenge your muscles in new and unique ways, helping you achieve amazing results.

Preparing Meals to Flatten Your Belly

What good would a weight loss plan be if you couldn't eat foods that tasted good? Luckily, you don't have to worry about that issue with your Belly Fat Diet plan. The recipes you can make while losing weight will surprise you and have your taste buds rejoicing. And the best part is that they can be simple and easy to make! You don't need to purchase hundreds of ingredients you've never heard of or slave away over the stove for hours in order to make food that will help melt away belly fat. In Part III, I show you more than 40 recipes you can experiment with.

But first, before you get down to business with the recipes, you need to stock up your kitchen and pantry so you have everything you need on hand to cook for your Belly Fat Diet plan. Chapter 11 helps you tackle this preparation. I provide you with simple tips and tricks to make planning and preparing meals as quick and easy as possible. After all, if your meal plan is too time consuming or takes too much effort, it isn't practical and won't be something you stick with.

In Chapters 12 through 15, I provide you with tasty recipes for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and even snacks and desserts. That's right — the Belly Fat Diet plan encourages you to snack and have dessert! Does it get much better than that? All the recipes I include in this book taste great and are loaded with belly-shrinking nutrients. For instance, seasonings like cayenne pepper, cinnamon, and turmeric are proven belly fat fighters and are incorporated in great-tasting ways into many recipes. Nutrients like omega-3 fatty acids, monounsaturated fats, and fiber also find their way into many of the recipes throughout this book for a powerful fat-fighting punch!

Fighting Through Challenges to Achieve and Maintain a Flat Belly

Achieving your ideal body weight and a flat belly isn't always easy. You may hit some roadblocks along the way, which can cause you to get off track with your Belly Fat Diet plan. But don't worry. In Part IV, I help you identify the most common obstacles you may encounter. I also provide you with the tools you need to overcome these challenges so you can stay on track and reach your weight loss and health goals and keep the weight off permanently!

In Chapter 16, I outline some of the most common pitfalls and slip-ups that may occur as you follow your Belly Fat Diet plan. I show you the best ways to avoid these challenges in the first place and also how to fix them and get right back on track with your plan if they do occur.

A big concern for those trying to lose weight and improve health is eating away from home. Whether you're going out to your favorite restaurant for a nice meal or eating at Grandma's house for a holiday dinner, you have to make smart choices so you don't get off track. After all, you aren't going to eat every meal at home for the rest of your life. In Chapter 17, I outline strategies you can use to stay on track whenever you eat away from home.

Maintaining your losses long term

A huge struggle that many dieters face is maintaining their losses. Losing weight and belly fat mean nothing if you don't make those results permanent. Fad diets are particularly problematic in this regard. You lose weight quickly with these diets, but because you don't implement lifestyle changes, you go right back to old habits and regain the weight.

I don't want you to set yourself up for failure, so I devote an entire chapter to maintaining your weight loss and belly fat losses. In Chapter 18, I show you how to identify when you've reached your weight loss goals, how to know whether you've hit a true plateau, and what to do to break through. I also explain the strategies you can implement daily to make sure your results last permanently. I even include a detailed meal plan to help you maintain your weight as well as instructions on how to adjust if you notice your weight beginning to creep back up.