

Standard Operating Procedure

Waist Circumference Measurement

Overview

The measurement of waist circumference is widely used by clinicians to monitor the distribution of body fat and can also be used to measure the risk of development of diseases such as type II diabetes and coronary heart disease.¹

This standard operating procedure is to aid clinical staff in measuring waist circumference.

1. Ensure that a long enough tape measure is available.
2. The tape measure should be placed mid way between the lower border of the costal margin (i.e. the bottom of the rib cage) and the top border of the iliac crest.
3. Place the tape at this mid way position and ensure it fits snugly but that it does not pinch the skin.
4. Get the patient to breathe out as normal, with the hands placed loosely by the side, and take the measurement.
5. Sometimes the bony landmarks are not easily located in obese patients. In this case, the tape measure can be placed at the level of the umbilicus, and a note to this effect made by the measurement so that the same method is used each time.

Reference:

1. Waist Circumference, The National Obesity Forum
<http://www.nationalobesityforum.org.uk/> accessed 04.05.10