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## Fat and fit? New research says it's possible



AFP Relax – Fri, Sep 7, 2012 6:45 PM PHT

New research finds that people can be obese yet physically healthy and fit and at no greater risk of heart disease or cancer than people of normal weight.

The key is being "metabolically fit," which means no high blood pressure, cholesterol or elevated blood sugar, and exercising, say scientists. Their study was **published** online September 4 in the *European Heart Journal*.

To reach their findings, the researchers looked at data from more than 43,000 Americans, more than a third of whom were obese. Of these 18,500, half were assessed as metabolically healthy after a physical examination and lab tests. In the study, this group of people didn't suffer from diabetes, high cholesterol or high blood pressure, and exercised more than the other obese subjects.

In addition, their risk of developing or dying from cardiovascular disease or cancer was identical to people of ideal weight and was half that of "metabolically less fit" obese people.

According to the BBC, lead researcher Dr. Francisco Ortega from the University of Granada in Spain stated the findings show that getting more exercise can keep you healthier, even if you're still overweight. "This research highlights once again the important role of physical fitness as a health marker," he stated.

In a separate study from 2010, obese people without metabolic risk factors for diabetes and heart disease, such as high blood pressure and cholesterol, were found not to have the elevated cardiovascular risk typical of obesity, but they represent only a small percentage of the obese population, according to a long-term study.

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