

Difference Between Visceral Fat and Subcutaneous Fat

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Key Difference - Visceral Fat vs Subcutaneous Fat

Body fat is considered a harmful risk factor for many diseases such as [cardiovascular diseases](#), [diabetes](#), and other metabolic complications. Currently, a lot of research is conducted on the body fat of humans due to above reasons. There are two main types of body fats; visceral body fat and subcutaneous body fat. Subcutaneous body fat is regarded healthy compared to the visceral body fat. Visceral body fat is the type of fat that is deposited around the organs such as [heart](#) and abdominal organs. Visceral fat cannot be subjected to liposuction hence, considered to be unhealthy. Subcutaneous fat is the type of fat that is underlying the skin. This is also referred to as belly fat and is less harmful. Belly fat plays a protective role by acting as an insulator. This fat can be subjected to liposuction. The **key difference** between the visceral fat and the subcutaneous fat is the site of deposition. **Visceral fat is deposited around the vital organs whereas subcutaneous fat is deposited under the skin.**

What is Visceral Fat?

Visceral fat is the extra abdominal fat deposited around the vital organs of our body such as abdominal organs and the heart. It is also known as extra subcutaneous fat or deep fat. Visceral fat is deposited due to the extra intake of [carbohydrate](#)-rich foods, fewer exercises, and other metabolic imbalances. Visceral fat is regarded as unhealthy since it is an increased risk factor for diseases such as coronary heart diseases, cancer, [stroke](#), [dementia](#), diabetes, [arthritis](#), sexual dysfunction and sleep disorders. Deposition of visceral fat also leads to insulin resistance which causes type II diabetes.

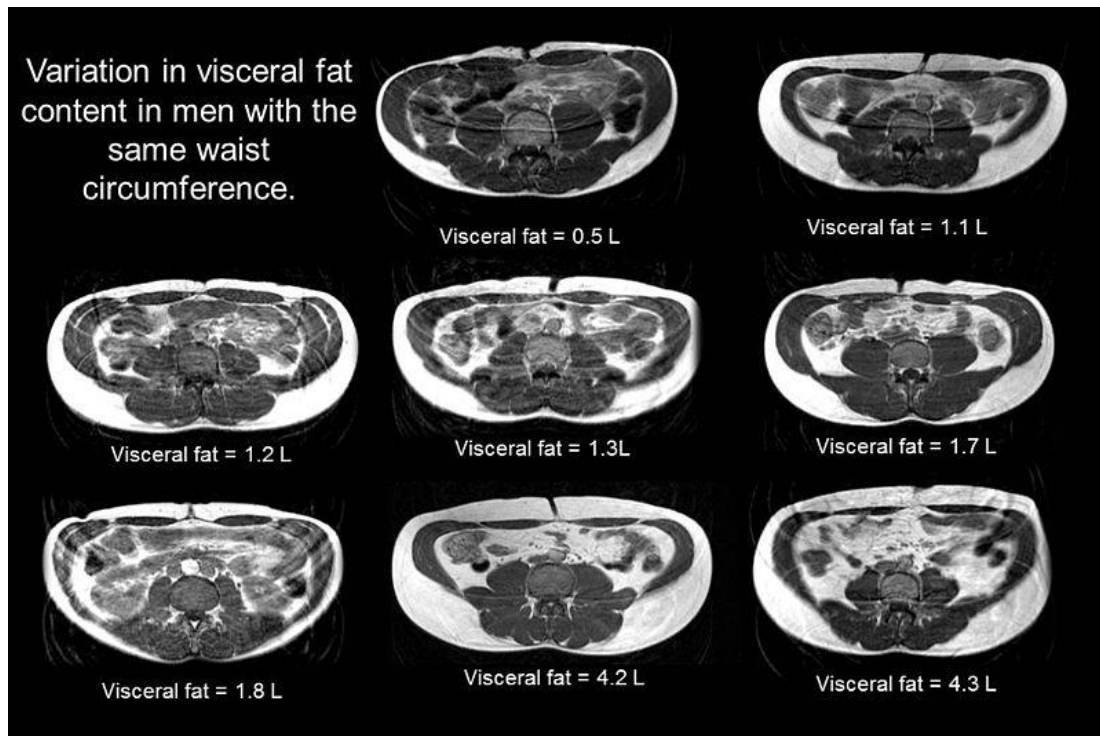


Figure 01: Visceral Fat

When intake of carbohydrate-rich food increases, the extra or excess [glucose](#) is converted to fats via the formation of Acetyl co A which is a precursor for the synthesis of [fatty acids](#). The acetyl Co A is first converted to malonyl co A. This leads to the formation of fatty acids leading to the deposition of fat in the visceral areas of the body. Thus, even though the person is lean and takes a less intake of fats, deposition of visceral fat could occur.

What is subcutaneous Fat?

Subcutaneous fat is known as the belly fat is the fat that is deposited under-lining the skin surface. Subcutaneous fat deposition occurs mainly due to the extra intake of fatty foods and carbohydrate-rich foods. Fats are converted to fatty acids and glycerol in the process of [digestion](#) which is then transported to the [liver](#) via [chylomicrons](#). The fatty acids undergo beta-oxidation to generate energy. In the situation of extra fatty acids, they are further transported to the extrahepatic tissue. Thus, the fat is deposited under-lining the skin and the abdominal area. Therefore, subcutaneous fat is referred to as belly fat. However, the deposition of subcutaneous fat is also dependent on genetics and hereditary factors.

The subcutaneous fat is used for energy production during starvation. Subcutaneous fat also acts as a thermal insulator and protects the inner organs from extreme

thermal conditions. Therefore, subcutaneous fat has a protective function in comparison with the visceral fat.

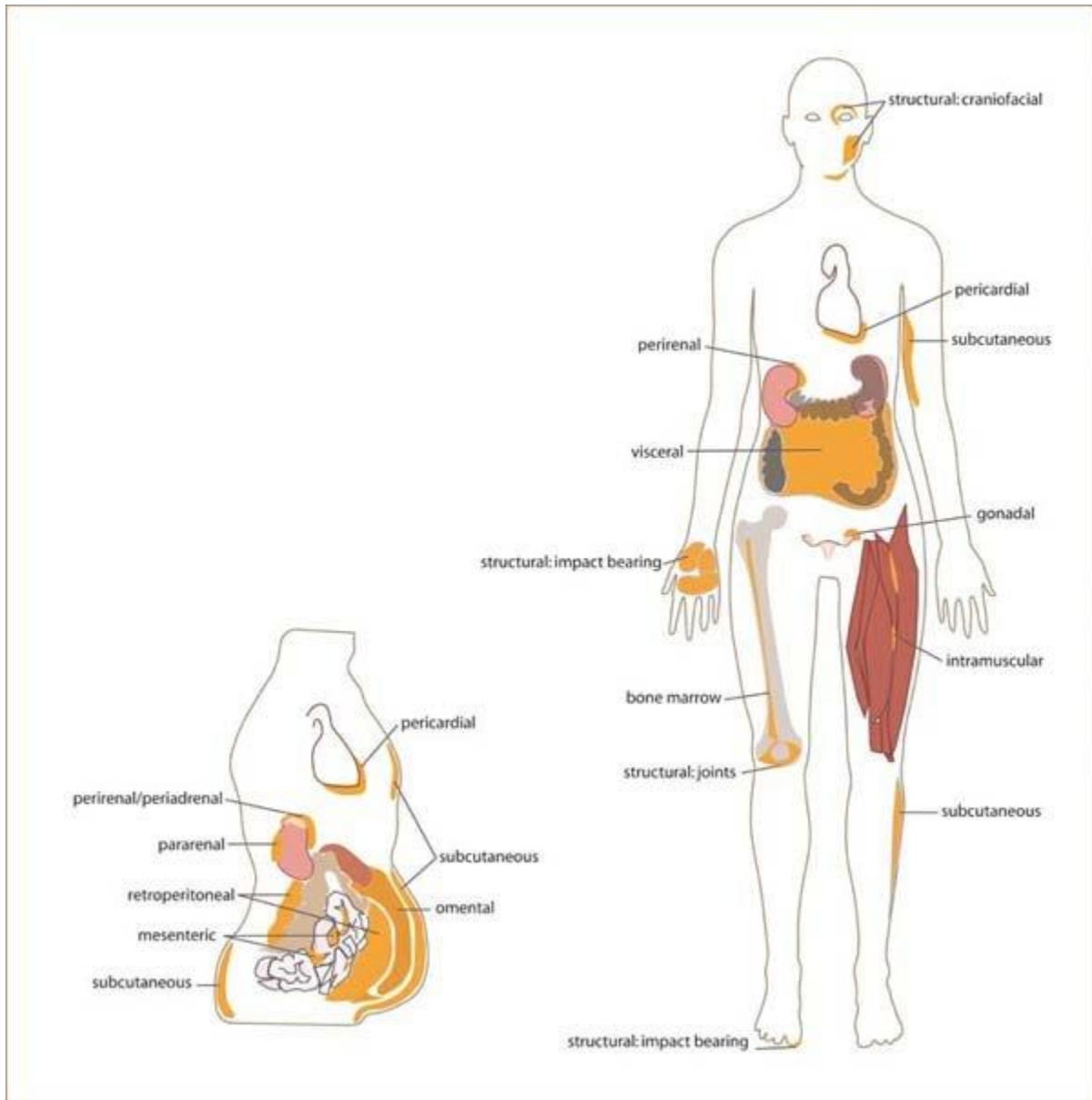


Figure 02: Subcutaneous Fat

Subcutaneous fat can be removed via liposuction, unlike visceral fat if the fat layers are too much.

What are the Similarities Between Visceral Fat and Subcutaneous Fat?

- Both form [adipose tissue](#) layers namely the visceral adipose and the subcutaneous adipose.
- Both can be reduced by regular exercises and controlled diets.
- Genetic and hereditary factors can cause both.

What is the Difference Between Visceral Fat and Subcutaneous Fat?

Visceral Fat vs Subcutaneous Fat	
Visceral body fat is the type of fat that is deposited around the body organs such as heart and abdominal organs.	Subcutaneous fat is the type of fat that is underlying the skin and commonly referred to as belly fat.
Healthiness	
Visceral fat cannot be subjected to liposuction hence, considered to be unhealthy.	Subcutaneous fat can be subjected to liposuction hence, less harmful.
Ability to Perform Liposuction	
Liposuction cannot remove visceral fat.	Liposuction can remove excess Subcutaneous fat.
Cause	
Visceral fat forms due to the excessive intake of carbohydrate-rich food.	Subcutaneous fat forms due to the intake of excess fatty and carbohydrate-rich foods.

Summary - Visceral Fat vs Subcutaneous Fat

Visceral fat and subcutaneous fat are the two main types of body fat. Visceral fat is considered as harmful body fat since the fat deposition occurs around the vital organs of the body. Visceral fat is formed due to excess intake of carbohydrates. Visceral fat leads to insulin resistance and thereby causes many disorders and

diseases. Thus, it is regarded as a risk factor for cardiovascular diseases. In contrast, subcutaneous fat is under-lining the skin. It has a relatively less health impact and plays a protective function in the body. Subcutaneous fat is deposited due to the excessive intake of fatty foods. This is the difference between visceral fat and subcutaneous fat.

Reference:

1. "Subcutaneous fat: what is it and how do I get rid of it?" WatchFit, 14 Oct. 2016,. [Available here](#)
2. Babcock, Jillian. "Visceral Fat: What It Is and Why It's So Dangerous." Dr. Axe, 4 Dec. 2017. [Available here](#)

Image Courtesy:

1. 'Variation in visceral fat in men with the same waist circumference' By ImagingFat ([CC BY-SA 3.0](#)) via [Commons Wikimedia](#)
2. 'White adipose distribution in the body.' By Cook, A. and Cowan, C. ([CC BY 3.0](#)) via [Commons Wikimedia](#)

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