

# Does a mother's pre-pregnancy weight affect her children's future fertility?

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A recent study published in *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica* found that sons born to mothers who fell within the overweight range were more likely to be diagnosed with infertility during adulthood than sons of mothers with normal-range weight. No association between maternal weight and infertility was seen in

daughters.

In the Danish study of 9,232 adult sons and daughters, 9.4% of participants were infertile. The authors adjusted for several potential confounding factors and found that sons whose mothers had a body mass index over 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup> before pregnancy had 1.4-times higher odds of [infertility](#) than sons whose mothers had a body mass index of 18.5 to 24.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup>.

Approximately 12.5% of couples are affected by infertility, which is often defined as unsuccessfully attempting to conceive for a year or longer. Overall, one-third of couples' infertility cases are caused by male reproductive issues, one-third by female reproductive issues, and one-third is either a combination or due to unknown factors.

"Infertility is a global public health issue, and it is important that research focus on addressing [risk factors](#)," said lead author Linn Arendt, MD, Ph.D., a postdoc at Aarhus University and Aarhus University Hospital. "We know that children born to [mothers](#) in the overweight or obesity weight range face higher risks of several adverse outcomes, both in the short and long term. These findings add to evidence that weight during pregnancy may also affect male future [reproductive health](#); however, the findings need to be corroborated in future studies."

**More information:** Linn H Arendt et al, Maternal pre-pregnancy overweight and infertility in sons and daughters: a cohort study, *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/aogs.14045](#)

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