

Obesity risk may pass from mothers to daughters

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Women with obesity may share risk for the disease with their daughters, but not their sons, according to a new study published in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*.

Obesity is a common, serious and costly disease affecting nearly half of the adults and 20 percent of children in the United States. It costs an estimated \$173 billion in [medical care costs](#). People with obesity are at higher risk of developing diabetes, [high blood pressure](#), heart issues, and many other conditions.

"These findings highlight that girls born to mothers who have obesity or have high amounts of body fat may be at higher risk of gaining excess body fat themselves," said Rebecca J. Moon, B.M., Ph.D., M.R.C.P.C.H., of the MRC Lifecourse Epidemiology Centre, University of Southampton in Southampton, U.K.

"Further studies are needed to understand why this is happening, but our findings suggest that approaches to addressing [body weight](#) and composition should start very early in life, particularly in girls born to mothers with obesity and overweight."

The researchers measured body fat and muscle in 240 children (9 years old or younger) and their parents in early childhood. They used this data to determine whether the [body mass index](#) (BMI)—a screening tool for overweight and obesity—and the amount of body fat and muscle in the child was related to that of their parents.

They found the girls had similar BMI and fat mass to their mothers, suggesting that girls born to mothers who have obesity or have high fat mass are at high risk of also developing [obesity](#) or overweight. The researchers did not find the same association between boys and their mothers or either girls or boys and their fathers.

More information: Rebecca J Moon et al, Parent-Offspring Associations in Body Composition: Findings From the Southampton Women's Survey Prospective Cohort Study, *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* (2023). [DOI: 10.1210/clinem/dgad128](https://doi.org/10.1210/clinem/dgad128).

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Provided by The Endocrine Society

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