

# In utero antibiotics and obesity risk

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Identifying risk factors for childhood obesity is necessary for developing prevention strategies. Previous studies of a potential association between antibiotic use during pregnancy and childhood obesity have had conflicting results.

William Heerman, MD, MPH and colleagues in the National Patient Centered Clinical Research Network (PCORnet) have now conducted a large retrospective cohort analysis to evaluate the possible association between [antibiotic use](#) during pregnancy and childhood obesity. PCORnet is a nationwide research network that enables multi-institutional research.

The investigators used [electronic health records](#) from seven healthcare institutions to study 53,320 mother-child pairs. They found that maternal antibiotic use during pregnancy was not associated with childhood obesity at age 5. They evaluated antibiotic exposure by trimester, total exposure and antibiotic type. The large number of mother-child pairs also facilitated study of sub-populations, such as children with complex health conditions.

Reporting in the *International Journal of Obesity*, the authors concluded that the long-term risk of [childhood obesity](#) from maternal antibiotic use during pregnancy appears to be negligible.

**More information:** Maternal antibiotic use during pregnancy and childhood obesity at age 5 years, *International Journal of Obesity* (2019). [DOI: 10.1038/s41366-018-0316-6](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41366-018-0316-6)

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