

## 2 years old -- a childhood obesity tipping point?

February 11 2010

---

While many adults consider a chubby baby healthy, too many plump infants grow up to be obese teens, saddling them with Type-2 diabetes, elevated cholesterol and high blood pressure, according to an article published this month in the journal *Clinical Pediatrics*.

The research suggests that the "tipping point" in [obesity](#) often occurs before two years of age, and sometimes as early as three months, when the child is learning how much and what to eat.

"I really think this should be a wake up call for doctors," said principal investigator Dr. John Harrington, a pediatrician at Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters and an assistant professor at Eastern Virginia Medical School. "Too often, doctors wait until medical complications arise before they begin treatment. What this study suggests is that prevention of obesity should begin far, far earlier."

This study comes in the midst of alarming rates of [childhood obesity](#), which now ranks as one of the most prominent health concerns in the United States today. While some hospitals have begun offering healthy eating and weight loss program for children, what hasn't been as clear is how early to intervene.

The researchers examined records from a pediatric practice of 111 children whose [body mass index](#) (BMI) exceeded 85 percent of the general population. Researchers determined that these children had started gaining weight in infancy at an average rate of .08 excess BMI

units per month. On average, this progression began when the children were three months old. Over half the children became overweight at or before age 2 and 90 percent before reaching their 5th birthday.

The *Clinical Pediatrics* study suggests [obesity prevention](#) efforts should begin before age two, when children reach a "tipping point" in a progression that leads to obesity later in life.

"Our study suggests that doctors may want to start reviewing the diet of children during early well-child visits," said Harrington. "Getting parents and children to change habits that have already taken hold is a monumental challenge fraught with road-blocks and disappointments. This study indicates that we may need to discuss inappropriate weight gain early in infancy to affect meaningful changes in the current trend of obesity."

**More information:** The article "Identifying the "Tipping Point" Age for Overweight Pediatric Patients" is available free for a limited time at [cpj.sagepub.com/cgi/rapidpdf/0009922809359418v1](http://cpj.sagepub.com/cgi/rapidpdf/0009922809359418v1) .

Provided by SAGE Publications

Citation: 2 years old -- a childhood obesity tipping point? (2010, February 11) retrieved 8 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-02-years-childhood-obesity.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------