

Study: Too much weight may delay infants' ability to crawl, walk

March 30 2010

(PhysOrg.com) -- Those cute little rolls of fat some infants have may actually slow their ability to crawl and walk, according to a new study by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The study, published recently online in *The Journal of Pediatrics*, shows that infants who are overweight may be slower than thinner [babies](#) to develop motor skills.

“This is concerning because children with motor skill delays may be less physically active and thus less likely to explore the environment beyond arm’s reach,” said Meghan Slining, a nutrition doctoral student at UNC’s Gillings School of Global Public Health and lead author of the study.

The findings are based on observations of 217 African-American first-time mothers who participated in the Infant Care, Feeding and Risk of Obesity Study, a UNC research project funded by the National Institutes of Health. The project is examining - in a population at risk of obesity - how parenting and infant feeding styles relate to infant diet and the risk of babies becoming overweight. The mothers ranged in age from 18 to 35 and their babies were 3 months old. Researchers visited the mothers and infants in their homes between 2003 and 2007. They weighed and measured the children at each visit, and also assessed their [motor skills](#) at 3, 6, 9, 12 and 18 months.

The researchers found that overweight infants were about twice as likely (1.8 times) as non-overweight infants to have a low score on the

Psychomotor Development Index test, reflecting delayed motor development. [Infants](#) with high subcutaneous fat (rolls of fat under their skin) were more than twice as likely (2.32 times) as babies without fat rolls to have a low score.

“There are a number of studies that show that weight status during the [infancy](#) and toddler years can set young children on an [obesity](#) trajectory that may be hard to change,” Slining said. “Our study shows that there are actually immediate consequences as well.”

Provided by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Citation: Study: Too much weight may delay infants’ ability to crawl, walk (2010, March 30) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-03-weight-infants-ability.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.