

# Moms who don't breastfeed more likely to develop type 2 diabetes

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Mothers who did not breastfeed their children have significantly higher rates of type 2 diabetes later in life than moms who breastfed, report University of Pittsburgh researchers in a study published in the September issue of the *American Journal of Medicine*.

"We have seen dramatic increases in the prevalence of type 2 [diabetes](#) over the last century," said Eleanor Bimla Schwarz, M.D., M.S., assistant professor of medicine, epidemiology, and obstetrics, gynecology and reproductive sciences at the University of Pittsburgh. "Diet and exercise are widely known to impact the risk of type 2 diabetes, but few people realize that [breastfeeding](#) also reduces mothers' risk of developing the disease later in life by decreasing maternal belly fat."

The study included 2,233 women between the ages of 40 and 78. Overall, 56 percent of mothers reported they had breastfed an infant for at least one month. Twenty-seven percent of mothers who did not breastfeed developed type 2 diabetes and were almost twice as likely to develop the disease as women who had breastfed or never given birth. In contrast, mothers who breastfed all of their children were no more likely to develop diabetes than women who never gave birth. These long-term differences were notable even after considering age, race, [physical activity](#) and tobacco and alcohol use.

"Our study provides another good reason to encourage women to breastfeed their infants, at least for the infant's first month of life," said Dr. Schwarz. "Clinicians need to consider women's pregnancy and

lactation history when advising [women](#) about their risk for developing [type 2 diabetes](#)."

Provided by University of Pittsburgh Schools of the Health Sciences

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