Losing weight not always a positive

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Encouraging the obese to lose weight may not always be beneficial for their wellbeing reports a paper published online in the *International Journal of Obesity*.

The research reveals how weight loss can lead to the release of persistant organic pollutants into the blood, which can have a significant negative impact on a person's health.

Persistant organic pollutants are organic compounds commonly created by humans in industrial processes, and have been linked to a wide variety of illnesses, including disruption of the endocrine, reproductive and immune systems, dementia, and cancers. They are stored in fat tissue in the body, however Duk-Hee Lee and colleagues noted that but during weight loss -when the volume of fat is reduced - these compounds are released into the blood where they are able to reach vital organs and take their effect. They observed that this effect occurred to a lesser extent when self reported weight change was sustained for only one year compared to when sustained for 10 years.

This work suggests that it may be important for doctors treating obesity to consider the effects of persistant organic pollutants as these may work against the better health that we generally expect from weight loss. Further research is however needed to determine whether negative health issues observed in weight loss subjects are directly due to an increase in persistant organic pollutants in the blood or to pre-existing conditions and environmental factors.

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