

Breakfast is an important meal, especially for teen moms and their kids

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Teen mothers who eat breakfast have healthier weights and snacking habits and may influence healthy eating habits among their children, says a recent study by obesity prevention expert Debra Haire-Joshu, PhD, professor at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis.

“It’s important to look at dietary patterns among postpartum teens to help reduce weight retention and prevent intergenerational obesity,” she says. “Overall, breakfast consumption among postpartum teens is low and interventions are needed to encourage breakfast consumption among teen mothers.”

Haire-Joshu, who also is director of the Center for [Obesity Prevention and Policy Research](#) at the Brown School, points out that “teen mothers now control the food environment for their child.

“Thus, patterns exhibited by the mothers, including lack of breakfast and high-risk sweetened drink and snacking behavior, might influence the intake of their young child,” Haire-Joshu says.

“Over time and left unchanged, these behaviors are reinforced as the child observes that parent and has access to high risk foods in their environment.”

Haire-Joshu’s study, “Postpartum Teens’ Breakfast Consumption Is Associated with Snack and Beverage Intake and Body Mass Index,”

followed 1,330 postpartum teens across 27 states.

Participants were enrolled in the Parents as Teachers Teen Program and completed a seven-day recall of their breakfast, snack and beverage consumption.

Almost half (42 percent) of the sample consumed breakfast fewer than two days per week.

Those who ate breakfast six to seven days per week consumed 1,197 fewer kilocalories per week from sweet and salty snacks, 1,337 fewer kilocalories per week from sweetened drinks, and had a lower BMI compared to those who ate breakfast fewer than two days per week.

Consumption of fruits, vegetables, milk, water and cereal as a snack were higher among regular [breakfast](#) consumers.

Haire-Joshu's study ran in a recent issue of the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*.

Provided by Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis

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