

# Obesity linked to poorer mental skills in seniors

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The belly worst place to carry extra weight, study says.

(HealthDay) -- Obesity is associated with reduced memory and thinking skills in adults aged 60 to 70, especially those with greater amounts of abdominal fat, according to a new study.

The study included 250 people aged 60 and older who underwent various measurements of their body fat and a test of thinking skills.

The researchers found that a high [body mass index](#) (BMI) was associated with increased risk of poor cognitive (mental) performance in people aged 60 to 70. BMI uses a person's height and weight to estimate their amount of body fat. In general, a higher BMI means more body fat.

The study also found that those with the highest level of abdominal fat tended to have worse thinking skills than those with the least amount of

abdominal fat.

Among the participants aged 60 to 70, those who were obese were older, more likely to be male and more likely to have [high blood pressure](#) than those who weren't obese.

There was no association between obesity and reduced mental skills among people older than 70, according to the study in the journal *Age and Ageing*.

"Our findings have important public health implications. The prevention of obesity, particularly central obesity, might be important for the prevention of [cognitive decline](#) or dementia," lead author Dae Hyun Yoon, of the Seoul National University Hospital Healthcare System in South Korea, said in a journal news release.

Although the study found that [obese adults](#) aged 60 to 70 tended to have poorer [thinking skills](#), it did not prove that obesity caused people to have worse memory or mental skills.

**More information:** The Society for Neuroscience offers advice about [healthy brain aging](#).

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