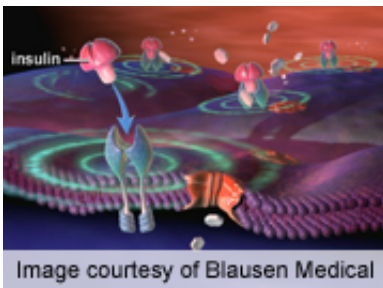


# Childhood famine increases risk of type 2 diabetes

June 5 2012

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Even a short period of moderate or severe undernutrition or famine during childhood or adolescence can increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes in adulthood, according to research published online May 29 in *Diabetes*.

(HealthDay) -- Even a short period of moderate or severe undernutrition or famine during childhood or adolescence can increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes in adulthood, according to research published online May 29 in *Diabetes*.

Annet F.M. van Abeelen, Ph.D., of the University Medical Center Utrecht in the Netherlands, and colleagues conducted a study involving 7,837 women from the European Prospective Investigation Into Cancer and Nutrition study who had been exposed to the 1944 to 1945 Dutch famine between the ages of 0 to 21 years. The association between [undernutrition](#) during childhood and adolescence with type 2 diabetes in adulthood was explored.

After adjusting for potential confounders, including age at famine exposure, smoking, and [education level](#), the researchers found that there was a dose-response association between self-reported famine exposure and the risk of type 2 diabetes. Relative to unexposed women, those who were exposed to moderate famine had an age-adjusted hazard ratio of 1.36 for type 2 diabetes, and those exposed to severe famine had an age-adjusted hazard ratio of 1.64. The associations persisted after adjustment for confounding variables.

"This study demonstrates for the first time, by using individual famine exposure data, that a short period of severe undernutrition during childhood or young adolescence is associated with an increased risk of [type 2 diabetes](#) in [adult life](#), in a dose-dependent manner," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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