

# Maternal BMI negatively linked to child cognition

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Maternal pre-pregnancy body mass index is negatively associated with children's cognitive performance at ages 5 and 7, although the overall effect size is modest, according to research published online Dec. 10 in *Pediatrics*.

(HealthDay)—Maternal pre-pregnancy body mass index (BMI) is negatively associated with children's cognitive performance at ages 5 and 7, although the overall effect size is modest, according to research published online Dec. 10 in *Pediatrics*.

Emre Basatemur, M.B.B.S., of University College London, and colleagues used data from the Millennium Cohort study to prospectively evaluate the association between maternal pre-pregnancy BMI and cognitive performance for 19,517 children at 5 and 7 years of age. General cognitive ability was identified using individual test scores from standardized cognitive assessments.

The researchers found that a mother's pre-pregnancy BMI correlated negatively with cognitive performance in their children at ages 5 (P = 0.0069) and 7 (P

"By using data from a large, contemporary national [birth cohort](#), we found that maternal pre-pregnancy BMI is negatively associated with children's [cognitive performance](#), even after adjusting for various socio-demographic confounders and children's BMI. The relationship appears to become stronger as the children get older," the authors write.

"Although our study design does not permit any inferences of causation, a suboptimal intrauterine environment in obesity may have direct effects on the developing [fetal brain](#)."

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

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