

Will your child be a slim adult?

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Credit: Daniel Miller

Will your child be a slim adult? A novel new study published in *PLOS ONE* asked 532 international English speaking adults to submit or "crowd-source" predictors of whether a child is going to be an overweight or a slim adult. Each participant offered what they believed to be the best predictor of what a child would weigh as an adult and submitted it in the form of a question. Questions were related to factors of participants' childhood experience including home environment, psychosocial well-being, lifestyle, built environment, and family history. Each participant also supplied his or her height and weight (to determine BMI) and answered questions generated by other participants about their own childhood behaviors and conditions. Several of the questions asked had a significant correlation with participants' current BMI as listed

below.

Adults who reported a lower BMI also reported having the following childhood experiences in common:

- Their families prepared meals using fresh ingredients.
- Their parents talked with them about nutrition.
- They frequently engaged in outdoor physical activity with their families.
- They slept a healthy number of hours on weeknights.
- They had many friends.

Adults who reported a higher BMI, also reported having the following childhood experiences in common:

- Food was used as a reward or punishment at home.
- They had obese parents and/or grandparents.
- They drank juice and soda more than water.
- Their parents restricted their food intake.
- They were bullied by peers.

While some of the factors listed above have been researched previously in relation to BMI, others have not been studied much or at all. These results indicate that "crowd-sourced," or publicly-generated, information could be used to identify new predictors that may, after further study, be useful in understanding and reducing obesity.

Furthermore, the trends in BMI obtained through this study provide insights into behaviors that should be encouraged to help children maintain a healthy BMI into adulthood! Parents should make note of these [predictors](#) and create a nurturing and healthy [home environment](#) and lifestyle for their children that includes: meals made from scratch, healthy eating conversations, plenty of sleep, outdoor exercise, and

supporting healthy friendships with peers.

Provided by Cornell Food & Brand Lab

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