

Review: Physical activity in pregnancy cuts cesarean risk

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(HealthDay)—Physical activity in pregnancy is associated with a reduction in the risk of cesarean delivery, according to a review published in the October issue of the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*.

Iris Domenjoz, M.B.B.S., from the University of Lausanne in Switzerland, and colleagues conducted a systematic [review](#) and meta-analysis to examine the impact of exercise programs during pregnancy on the course of labor and delivery. Data were collected from 16 randomized controlled trials, involving 3,359 women.

The researchers found that the risk of cesarean delivery was significantly lower for women in exercise groups (relative risk, 0.85; 95 percent confidence interval, 0.73 to 0.99). In exercise groups there was no

significant reduction in birth weight. Among the groups, the risk of instrumental delivery was similar (relative [risk](#), 1.00; 95 percent confidence interval, 0.82 to 1.22). Due to insufficient data, conclusions could not be drawn on Apgar score, episiotomy, epidural anesthesia, perineal tear, length of labor, and induction of labor. Women in the exercise groups gained significantly less weight than those in control groups, based on data from 11 studies involving 1,668 women (mean difference, -1.13 kg).

"This is an important finding to convince women to be active during their [pregnancy](#) and should lead the physician to recommend physical exercise to pregnant women, when this is not contraindicated," the authors write.

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