

Prenatal exercise lowers risks of C-sections, higher birth weights

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Pregnant women who exercise can significantly lower the risk of undergoing Caesarean sections and giving birth to large babies, a University of Alberta study has found.

Prenatal exercise has been suggested to be a means to prevent [childhood obesity](#) through a "normalization" in birth weight (ie. reducing the risk of having a large baby at birth). University of Alberta researchers conducted a meta-analysis to analyze 28 randomized control studies encompassing 5,322 women that looked at the influence of maternal exercise on baby outcomes.

"We found that women who exercised had a 31 per cent reduction in the risk of having a large baby without changing the risk of having a small baby or an earlier baby," said lead researcher Margie Davenport, an assistant professor in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation. "Further, the risk of having a Caesarean section was reduced by 20 per cent."

The findings, recently published in *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, are important because babies who are born large tend to be heavier as children and into adulthood.

Provided by University of Alberta

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