

# Risk of post-op infections up in overweight, obese children

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(HealthDay)—Overweight and obese children seem to be more likely

than others to develop postoperative surgical site infections, according to a study published recently in *Surgical Infections*.

Researchers have already documented this connection in adults. But, "research on this topic among children and adolescents is scarce," study coauthor Catherine Hunter, M.D., a pediatric surgeon at the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, said in a hospital news release. "The information from this first-of-its-kind study can now be used in assessing and counseling preoperative pediatric surgical patients and their families."

Using statistics from a U.S. surgical database, the researchers focused on 1,380 patients aged 2 to 18 who developed [surgical site infections](#) after major surgery in 2012 or 2013. Noting that 40 percent were overweight or obese, the researchers determined that the [overweight children](#) had 23 percent higher odds for infection. Obese children had 43 percent higher odds. The researchers also looked at 115 patients from a single surgical center who developed wound infections. They found that 30 percent of them were overweight or obese.

"When considering children, adolescents, and adults, there are several theories as to why overweight or [obese patients](#) are at higher risk for infection," Hunter said. "These include impaired wound healing due to the lower oxygen tension found in the excess fat tissue surrounding the wound as well as impaired lymphocyte responsiveness. However, more studies need to look at this further."

**More information:** [Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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