

1 in 3 women experience 'loss of control' eating in pregnancy

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More than a third of women report feeling out of control over the amount they eat during pregnancy, according to new UCL-led research.

The study of over 11,000 [women](#), published today in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, found that 36.3 percent of women experienced 'loss of [control](#)' eating in pregnancy– a characteristic feature of binge eating defined as feeling out of control whilst eating, irrespective of the amount consumed.

The 5.2 percent of women who reported frequent loss of control eating, gained, on average, 3.5kg more in pregnancy than women who didn't lose control. The [children](#) of these women also had two-fold increased odds of being obese at age 15. Women who experienced any loss of control over eating also gave birth to heavier babies.

"This is the first study to investigate loss of control eating during pregnancy and its effects on pregnancy, child birth-weight and long-term weight. We found that loss of control eating is common and despite having serious implications for mothers and children it has received very little attention," said Dr. Nadia Micali (UCL Great Ormond Street Hospital Institute of Child Health and University of Geneva and University Hospital of Geneva, Switzerland)

"Gestational weight gain not only puts children at a greater risk of being obese but is a predictor of later obesity in mothers. Our findings further the understanding of risk factors for obesity and highlight an urgent need for better identification and support for mothers who experience loss of control eating, and understanding risk mechanisms."

Researchers analysed data from 11,132 women from Children of the 90s, the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), and found that 582 women self-reported frequent loss of control eating with 3,466 women experiencing it occasionally.

Women completed a Food Frequency Questionnaire at 32 weeks and pregnancy weight gain and birth-weight were obtained from obstetric

records. The weight and height of 5,515 children were measured at 15 ½ years.

Women who experienced any loss of control eating had a higher prevalence of dieting in [pregnancy](#), were more dissatisfied with their shape, consumed more snacks such as chocolate and cakes ,ate more calories overall and had lower intakes of Vitamin A, C and B6. Women who frequently lost control over eating also had less Vitamin B1 and folic acid.

Provided by University College London

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