

# Shorter people more likely to develop diabetes, study suggests

October 11 2019, by Najja Parker

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A poor diet and lack of exercise can lead to diabetes. But your height could also be a factor, according to a new report.

Researchers from the German Institute of Human Nutrition recently conducted a study, published in the *Diabetologia* journal, to determine the association between height and Type 2 [diabetes risk](#).

To do so, they evaluated about 2,600 people in Germany ages 35 to 65 from the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition, a study that explores the relationship between diet and cancer.

The team examined the subjects' health, including their [body weight](#), body height and sitting height.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the average height is 5 feet 9 inches for U.S. men and 5 feet 4 inches for U.S. women.

After analyzing the results, they found every four-inch increase in height was linked to a 41% lower risk of [diabetes](#) for men and a 33% reduced risk for women.

"Our findings suggest that short people might present with higher cardiometabolic risk factor levels and have higher diabetes risk compared with tall people," the authors said in the study.

Although the scientists do not fully understand why there is a relationship between height and diabetes risk, they hypothesized liver fat content could play a role.

They said taller people typically have lower liver fat content, while shorter people have higher levels of it, which is a diabetes risk factor.

"Although increased height was associated with reduced risk of Type 2 diabetes," the authors noted, "our data support that tallness is unlikely to modulate risk directly, but rather liver fat and other cardiometabolic risk

factors are important mediators."

This isn't the first assessment to link [height](#) with disease risk.

In 2018, scientists from the University of California Riverside found taller people were at greater risk of a cancer diagnosis, because they had more cells in their body that could mutate and lead to the illness. They said a person's chances of developing the disease boosted by 10% for every 4 inches they were over [average height](#).

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Citation: Shorter people more likely to develop diabetes, study suggests (2019, October 11)  
retrieved 8 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-10-shorter-people-diabetes.html>

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