

Pregnant women exposed to PFAS may be at risk for obesity, heart disease later in life

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Women with higher levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) during pregnancy may experience long-term weight gain and heart problems later in life, according to new research, published in *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*, titled "Early Pregnancy Plasma Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) and Maternal

Midlife Adiposity."

[PFAS](#) are manmade chemicals found in food packaging, cookware, clothes, drinking water, [personal care products](#) and many other consumer goods. These [endocrine-disrupting chemicals \(EDCs\)](#) can interfere with hormones and cause health issues such as obesity, infertility and cancer.

"Our study supports the idea that pregnancy may be a sensitive period of PFAS exposure as it may be associated with long-term weight gain and subsequent adverse cardiometabolic health outcomes in women," said the study's first author Jordan Burdeau, Ph.D., of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, Mass.

"Our findings may improve understanding of the effects of PFAS on cardiometabolic health during pregnancy, which in turn may improve early prevention or detection of adverse cardiometabolic health outcomes in women."

The researchers studied 547 [pregnant women](#) in their early 30s, comparing their PFAS levels during pregnancy with [cardiometabolic health](#) outcomes at age 50. They found women with higher levels of PFAS in their blood during early [pregnancy](#) weighed more and had more body fat at 50 years old than those with lower levels, potentially making them more susceptible to obesity and heart health problems later in life.

"It's important to try to limit your PFAS exposure as it could reduce your risk of health issues later in life," Burdeau said.

More information: Early Pregnancy Plasma Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) and Maternal Midlife Adiposity, *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* (2024)

Provided by The Endocrine Society

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