

Weight gain in children occurs after tonsil removal, not linked to obesity

April 17 2014

Weight gain in children after they have their tonsils removed (adenotonsillectomy) occurs primarily in children who are smaller and younger at the time of the surgery, and weight gain was not linked with increased rates of obesity.

About 500,000 children in the United States have their tonsils removed each year. The [childhood obesity](#) rate prompted reevaluation of the question of [weight gain](#) after adenotonsillectomy.

The authors reviewed [medical records](#) and the final study consisted of 815 patients (ages 18 years and younger) who underwent adenotonsillectomy from 2007 through October 2012.

The greatest increases in weight were seen in children who were smaller (in the 1st through 60th percentiles for weight) and who were younger than 4 years at the time of surgery. Children older than 8 years gained the least weight. An increase in weight was not seen in children who were heavier (above the 80th percentile in weight) before surgery. At 18 months after surgery, weight percentiles in the study population increased by an average of 6.3 percentile points. Body mass index percentiles increased by an average 8 percentile points. Smaller children had larger increases in BMI percentile but larger children did not.

"Despite the finding that many children gain weight and have higher BMIs after tonsillectomy, in our study, the proportion of children who were obese (BMI >95th percentile) before surgery (14.5 percent)

remained statistically unchanged after [surgery](#) (16.3 percent). On the basis of this work, adenotonsillectomy does not correlate with increased rates of childhood obesity."

More information: *JAMA Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg*. Published online April 17, 2014. [DOI: 10.1001/jamaoto.2014.411](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaoto.2014.411)

Provided by The JAMA Network Journals

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