

[IMAGE]

Antibiotic Use and Childhood Obesity: A Clear Connection

By Editorial Staff

While processed, empty-calorie foods and sedentary behavior usually take the blame for skyrocketing childhood obesity rates, a recent study suggests another culprit: antibiotics (AB). According to the study, antibiotic use within the first two years of birth was associated with a significantly higher risk of obesity at ages 2-5. The risk increased whether the child took any wide-spectrum (WS) antibiotic ("wide spectrum" or "broad spectrum" means the antibiotic acts against a wide range of bacteria), four or more antibiotics, or four or more antibiotics that included at least one AB of the wide-spectrum variety:

- Any wide-spectrum AB: 11 percent increased obesity risk
- Any AB (four or more): 11 percent increased obesity risk
- Four or more AB (at least one WS): 17 percent increased obesity risk

By the way, the study also revealed that nearly seven in 10 infants (0-23 months of age) received at least one course of antibiotics before age 2, so don't think antibiotic use is an uncommon occurrence during this period of a child's development. Talk to your doctor about the association between infant antibiotic use and childhood obesity. It's part of a larger discussion you should always have with your medical provider before filling a prescription for any member of your family.

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