

[IMAGE]

Obesity Is Bad for the Brain

By Editorial Staff

When we think about obesity (and we think about it a lot these days because it's impacts so many people), we often think about the physical or psychological consequences. Yes, obesity is a driver of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal health issues and even some cancers. And on the psychological side, it can diminish self-worth, leading to anxiety and depression. But what about the impact on the brain itself?

Research implicates obesity in diminishing brain health, specifically brain "thinning" that essentially accelerates the aging process by a decade or more and could contribute to cognitive decline. In the study, people in their 60s with higher body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference were more likely to have a thinner brain cortex six years after initial measurements.

brain - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark While the cortex does thin naturally with age, the rate of thinning during the study period was significantly greater than normal, which researchers attributed to obesity factors (BMI, waist circumference) after accounting for other potential variables such as high blood pressure, alcohol consumption and smoking. The cortex is "gray matter" in the brain and is responsible for memory, speech, decision-making and sensory perception, among other functions. Study findings appear in the research journal *Neurology*.

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