

[IMAGE]

## **Aerobics During Pregnancy Benefits Baby**

By Editorial Staff

Expectant mothers are encouraged to maintain a healthy weight during pregnancy, but the benefits from exercise aren't just for the mother. Research suggests babies also benefit from their mothers' exercise efforts during the gestation period. In particular, infants whose mothers exercised aerobically during the gestation period appear to have increased neuromotor development at one month compared to infants whose mothers passed on aerobics.

Neuromotor skills are assessed at various points during early childhood to ensure the baby is developing normally. In this study, published in *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, researchers evaluated movement skills (reflexes, stationary skills and locomotion) in 1-month-old infants whose mothers had performed 50 minutes of supervised aerobic activity, three days a week during pregnancy. The same neuromotor skills were also evaluated in a comparison group of 1-month-old infants whose mothers maintained usual physical activity during pregnancy.

Infants of women in the aerobic exercise group performed better on tests commonly used to evaluate neuromotor abilities compared to infants whose mothers served as controls and did not receive supervised aerobic activity sessions. The study authors speculate that infants with early movement skills may be more inclined to be active during childhood, suggesting that "exercise [by the mother] during pregnancy may potentially reduce childhood risk of obesity."

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