

[IMAGE]

A Big Reason to Watch Weight During Pregnancy

By Editorial Staff

A certain amount of weight gain during pregnancy is expected and healthy; after all, you're not only carrying the weight of your developing child, but also providing nourishment for their healthy growth. But too much maternal weight gain can be dangerous ... and not just for the mother. We're talking about the health and development of the child.

Researchers posed this question: "Is maternal prenatal weight associated with offspring cognitive ability and behavior?" Findings, published in *JAMA Network Open*, suggest the answer is yes. "Each five-unit increase in maternal BMI [body-mass index] after 35 weeks' gestation was associated with a slightly lower child intelligence quotient at 6.5 years and lower cognitive scores in multiple domains at 16 years. Associations were not mediated by child weight."

The two clear conclusions from this study: 1) Pregnant women should be aware of these findings and work with their pediatrician to ensure healthy weight gain during pregnancy, particularly if they are already overweight or obese. 2) As the authors themselves state: "The most clinically relevant implication of this analysis suggests that children born to women with obesity should be observed closely for neurodevelopmental problems and referred as appropriate for early intervention or other supportive services."

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