

[IMAGE]

## Obesity May Contribute to Cervical Cancer

Obesity has been linked to a multitude of health problems, from increased blood pressure and heart disease to sleep apnea, breathing problems and gallstones. In women, excessive fat has been shown to increase levels of estrogen, which can lead to the development of endometrial cancer, a condition that affects the lining of the uterus.

Height and weight can also contribute to endometrial cancer, and they are risk factors for cervical cancer, whereas the role obesity plays in cervical cancer remains uncertain. To test whether obesity may lead to an increased risk of developing cervical cancer, investigators evaluated a variety of potential risk factors in 560 women: 124 diagnosed with adenocarcinoma (a type of cervical cancer linked specifically to high estrogen levels); 139 with squamous-cell cervical cancer; and 307 women who did not have cancer. Among their findings:

- Women who were heavier, had a high body mass index (BMI) or had fat that was concentrated in the midsection were far more likely to have adenocarcinoma.
- Women with a BMI greater than 30 (considered clinically obese) and "apple-shaped" women (those with high waist-to-hip ratios) were both twice as likely to develop adenocarcinoma.
- Women with high BMIs had more advanced stages of adenocarcinoma when they were diagnosed with cancer, even if they received regular Pap smears.

Although larger studies are needed, these results support the theory that obesity, like height and weight, may lead to the onset of some types of cervical cancer. Women who are obese should speak with their physician about ways to lose weight and the benefits of a healthy, low-fat diet, and receive more frequent Pap smears to detect the early signs of adenocarcinoma.

### *Reference*

Lacey JV, Swanson CA, Britton LA, et al. Obesity as a potential risk factor for adenocarcinomas and squamous cell carcinomas of the uterine cervix. *Cancer* Aug. 15, 2003: Volume 98, Number 4, pp.814-821.

For more information about women's health issues, go to

[www.chiroweb.com/find/tellmeabout/women.html](http://www.chiroweb.com/find/tellmeabout/women.html).

Page printed from:

[http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=589&no\\_paginate=true&no\\_b=true](http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=589&no_paginate=true&no_b=true)