

Low-Income Mothers More Likely to Overfeed Infants

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Low-income mothers who are single or suffer from depression are more likely to overfeed infants, a practice that can lead to excess weight gain, according to a study presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies annual meeting and reported by [HealthDay News](#).

For the study, researchers at New York University looked at data from more than 250 low-income mothers, primarily in Latino households. Researchers found that almost a quarter of the mothers added cereal to baby bottles and that mothers with depression were 15 times more likely to do the same compared to those without depression.

“Our results are especially concerning because they suggest that depressed mothers may be more likely to add cereal to the bottle, which may increase their children’s risk of obesity,” said lead author and general academic pediatrics fellow Candice Taylor Lucas, MD, an associate professor of pediatrics at the NYU School of Medicine and Bellevue Hospital Center in New York City.

Researchers also found that single moms were much more likely to add cereal to bottles as well as moms who felt their babies had emotional reactions to daily routines.

“Overall, these findings demonstrate that stressors prevalent in low-income households, such as depression, single parenthood and associated infant behavioral challenges, influence feeding practices likely to promote obesity,” Lucas said.

Researchers are concerned that these feeding practices will lead to weight gain and eventually obesity. Currently, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describes obesity as a national epidemic, one that is a major contributor to some of the leading causes of death, including heart disease, stroke and diabetes. And Latinos are at high risk: In 2009, they were 1.2 times as likely to be obese than non-Latino whites. This study is hoping to reverse the trend.

As Lucas summed it up: “It is important to provide support for parents related to healthy feeding practices if we are to end the epidemic of childhood obesity.”
