

Using household disinfectants could be making your kids fat



A study published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal suggests that common household disinfectants are linked to overweight children.

Common cleaning products are linked to childhood obesity, according to research published Monday in the Canadian Medical Association Journal.

Disinfectants and multi-surface cleaners could contribute to weight gain in children by altering the gut bacteria of infants, the research showed.

Canadian researchers said that fecal samples showed that 3- and 4-month-old infants exposed to antibacterial cleaners weekly had higher levels of a type of gut bacteria called Lachnospiraceae that zaps extra energy out of food. **These babies were more likely to have a higher body mass index and be either overweight or obese by age 3.**

Anita Kozyrskyj, senior researcher and a professor of pediatrics at the University of Alberta in Canada, told HealthDay that findings showed parents who used "eco-friendly" cleaning products had babies with lower odds of excess weight by age 3.

"Take it easy when you're cleaning with disinfectants. Our observations were at the high end [of cleanliness], with people who were cleaning more than weekly, up to daily."

Research doesn't prove cause-and-effect



U.S. cleaning products representatives said the study made "sensational claims."

Researchers collected fecal samples from 757 babies, aged 3-4 months, and asked mothers about their household cleaner use. They then tracked weight gain in the babies to age 3.

The research, while drawing a compelling link between gut bacteria and weight in adulthood as previous research has done, did not prove a causal link.

Representatives with the cleaning product industry said they were, "disappointed at the sensational claims."

Richard Sedlak, executive vice president of technical and international affairs for the American Cleaning Institute, said in a statement that researchers ignored other possible reasons for kids' excess weight.

"Based on our scientific and technical review, the assumptions made by the researchers don't really hold up," Sedlak said. "There were notable limitations in the research, as reported by the "Journal's" editors, along with a study design that ignored all interventions in the children's lives between 3 months and 3 years of age and it did not account for 'the timing of food introduction and child diet.'"