

Changes in maternal weight 5–10 years after a first delivery

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SUMMARY: Obesity affects more than one-third of adults. The high prevalence of obesity in women may in part be a function of pregnancy since this is a time in woman's life when her weight increases significantly. In one of the first analysis we did with MOAD, we found that obesity was more common in women who had a cesarean delivery as compared to a vaginal delivery. As a result, we wondered whether long-term changes in weight might in part be related to the type of delivery a woman has with her first child.

For this analysis, we compared a woman's weight at the end of her first pregnancy (right before delivery) to her weight at her first MOAD visit (5-10 years after her first delivery). We then looked at a number of different variables such as mode of delivery (vaginal vs. cesarean), age, race, weight of the baby, a history of diabetes, etc to determine what had an impact on change in weight. We found:

- A women's weight at the time of her first delivery is a strong predictor of weight 5-10 years later, with an average weight loss of 11kg (24.3lbs)
- Over 5-10 years since their first delivery, black women and women with diabetes lost less weight than women without these characteristics
- Women who deliver by cesarean are more likely to be heavier at the time of birth and 5-10 years later, but long-term changes in weight were not influenced by cesarean versus vaginal birth.
- Breastfeeding did not influence long-term change in maternal weight

The full paper was published in Women's Health. You can read the full text here:

http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/johns_hopkins_bayview/docs/medical_services/obstetrics_gynecology/research/MOAD/Obesity_FullText.pdf