

# Adolescent Obesity May Raise Pancreatic Cancer Risk

Being obese was linked to a fourfold increase in pancreatic cancer risk.

November 16, 2018 By [Alicia Green](#)

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Previous studies have linked obesity in adulthood to a greater risk of pancreatic cancer. Now, new findings published in the journal *Cancer* suggest that people who are obese during adolescence may be four times more likely to be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer later in life, reports [Wiley](#).

For the study, Zohar Levi, MD, of Rabin Medical Center and Tel Aviv University and colleagues analyzed more than 1 million Israeli Jewish men and over 700,000 Jewish women. Participants had undergone a mandatory physical examination between ages 16 and 19 from 1967 to 2002.

Using the Israel National Cancer Registry, researchers identified pancreatic cancer incidence through 2012. There were 551 new pancreatic cancer cases identified over an average of about 23 years of follow-up. (This included 423 cancers among men and 128 cancers among women.)

Researchers discovered that obesity was associated with a 3.67 times higher pancreatic cancer risk among men and a 4.07 times higher risk among women. A high to normal body-mass index and being overweight were linked to a 49 percent and 97 percent increased risk for pancreatic cancer among men, respectively.

“The overall population attributable fraction of pancreatic cancer due to adolescent overweight and obesity was 11 percent among this Israeli Jewish population,” said Levi.

According to the [American Cancer Society](#), an estimated 55,440 people have been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2018. Pancreatic cancer accounts for nearly 3 percent of all cancers in the United States and 7 percent of all cancer deaths.

[Click here](#) to learn how some people in minority populations are more likely to develop pancreatic cancer if diagnosed with diabetes after age 50.

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