

# The CIDSO News

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*"A Brighter Tomorrow"*

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## *Obesity-Related Hormone Higher in Children with Down Syndrome*

*Reprinted from NADS News, January 2008*

Children with Down syndrome are more likely than their siblings to have higher levels of a hormone associated with obesity, according to pediatric researchers. The hormone, leptin, may contribute to the known higher risk of obesity among children and adults with Down syndrome.

A research team from The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the University Of Pennsylvania School Of Medicine published their study online in the Journal of Pediatrics. The researchers studied 35 children with Down syndrome and 33 of their siblings. All of the children were between the ages of four and 10 and were from the Philadelphia area. The researchers intentionally did not include severely obese children in the study, in order to focus on risk factors for obesity before obesity occurred. The children with Down syndrome had significantly higher body mass index, a higher percentage of body fat, and higher levels of leptin compared to their siblings. The higher leptin levels persisted even when the researchers adjusted for the effect of percentages of body fat, suggesting that differences in body composition did not account for the difference in leptin levels.

"The normal role of leptin is to suppress appetite and regulate body weight," said senior author Nicolas Stettler, M.D., MSCE, a pediatric nutrition specialist at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. "In general, obese people have higher levels of leptin, which suggests that they have some leptin resistance—their bodies do not respond to the hormone properly. Because Down syndrome is a chromosome disorder, children with Down syndrome may have a genetic predisposition to more severe leptin resistance."

Sheela N. Magge, M.D., M.S.C.E., a pediatric endocrinologist at Children's Hospital, the first author of the study, stressed that more research remains to be done on this question, as the reasons are yet uncertain why patients with Down syndrome are at higher risk of obesity. "Although the study had an advantage in including siblings as a control group, because this decreases the influence of different environments on children with or without Down syndrome, the sample size was limited, so larger studies are necessary. However, our findings may point to a useful approach to understanding why obesity often occurs in Down syndrome."

A better understanding of the causes of obesity opens up new possibilities for treatment. In the meantime, like others who struggle with weight issues, careful nutritional planning and exercise can help individuals with Down syndrome lead healthier lives.

## *The View From My Shoes: The First Few Weeks*

I am on my way home with my Mom, and Dad is driving. I just went through this birthing process and stayed with my Mom in the hospital for a few days. I am not too sure about these two, but I am pretty sure they like me and I am going to try and like them. There were some tears early on when some doctor told my folks I had an extra chromosome, but I pulled off my best new born smile and those tears disappeared. I'll have to use that more often.

Home now and I have a dog. Oh my, is she ever glad to see me, and am I ever going to tease her. I might even climb on her some day...we shall see. Oh, that must be some old people here to check me out. I think I'll call them Grandma and Grandpa until I can figure out shorter name that fits. Speaking of a fit. Grandma has a place that I really like; I'm loving it.

We have had several visitors and from what I can tell they don't know quite what to say when they see me for the first time. So for those of you who have not yet come by, I have some advise; it's real simple. Shake my Dad's hand and tell him what a good job he did. Look my Mom in the eye and tell her how happy you are for her. Look me over and tell both Mom and Dad how cute I am. Pick me up, kiss me and hold me. I may not like you as well as my Grandma, but I will not break and we can try to get used to each other. I'm a typical new born with just an extra item.

Stay tuned, but right now have to give a yelp because Grandma has forgotten I'm in the crib.

## *State Resources on the Web*

[www.thearcofil.org](http://www.thearcofil.org) The Arc of Illinois

[www.state.il.us/agency.icdd](http://www.state.il.us/agency.icdd) Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities

[www.illinoislifespan.org](http://www.illinoislifespan.org) Illinois statewide information resource and referral for advocacy and services for people with developmental disabilities

## *CEC and Bowling Corrected*

CEC is committed to bowling with our adults on a regular basis. They are planning on joining our adults for bowling at ISU's Bowling and Billiards Center. If you have someone in your family who is interested in bowling, they will meet every other Tuesday from 7:00-8:30 p.m., beginning in mid-September. Additional details will be provided closer to the date.

## *Picnic Plans*

Plan on joining in on the CIDSO Picnic fun, September 7th. We will meet at Fairview Park from noon to 3:00 p.m. CIDSO will provide place settings, drinks and the main course. Please bring a pot-luck item to share. Contact Judy Bates at 726-1145 to RSVP so she can be sure to have enough food.

## *Do You Know Who Your Buddies Are?*

Now is the time to start getting your Buddy Walk Team together. Gather your co-workers, classmates, neighbors, family and friends and join in on the fun. The team with the most participants this year will be the Grand Marshalls of the walk. Just be sure to turn in your official team size to the registration table at the event before the walk begins at 9:30 a.m. Make a sign to show your team support or just show up early and make one before the walk.

Be sure to check out [www.firstgiving.com](http://www.firstgiving.com) and view the various web pages that have been set up in support of our Buddy Walk. There will be a prize given out at the walk for the most creative web site.

In addition to the food, fun, and raffle that have been at past walks, this year's will also include inflatables, a climbing wall, bubble fun, and even participation by ISU's Women's Basketball Team. You never know what kind of fun will happen at the Buddy Walk, make sure you don't miss out!

## *Mark the Date:*

**September 7:**  
*CIDSO Picnic*

**September 12**  
*Buddy Walk Pre-Registration Due*

**September 27:**  
*Buddy Walk*

### **Disclaimer Policy**

The editor of this newsletter writes as a non-professional. CIDSO does not promote any therapy, treatment, institution or professional system, etc. Please discuss specific concerns with your health care professional.