

Shortness: Environmental factors can alter genetics

Depression doesn't just hurt—it stunts growth, according to a new study published in the journal *Pediatrics*.

Mothers who suffer from depression the first year of their child's life are more likely to have shorter kids, based on findings by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Pamela Surkin, an associate professor at the university, led a team of researchers in analyzing data of over 6,000 mothers and babies through the course of four years. They discovered moms with moderate to severe depression nine months after their children were born, were 50 percent more likely to have shorter kids by the time they turned five.

Surkin believes the side effects of [postpartum depression](#) are at the root of her results.

“We hypothesize that the main link between maternal postpartum symptoms of depression and child height is through care-giving behaviors, perhaps by means of feeding practices or through these mothers' reduced abilities to get help for their sick children when they are sick,” Pamela J. Surkan, the study's lead researcher and an assistant professor at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, tells Yahoo! Shine.

View the original article here: [Shortness: Environmental factors can alter genetics](#)