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Depressed mums and dads make kids fussy eaters  
  
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CHILDREN are more likely to be picky eaters if their parents suffer from **depression** or **anxiety**, a study has found.

And experts have told doctors to be on the lookout for mental health problems among mums and dads that could affect kids.

Dutch researchers found mothers who had **anxiety** or **depression** during pregnancy were more likely to have youngsters who were fussy about their food by the age of four.

If both parents suffered "internalising problems" while the mum was carrying, youngsters were also at risk of being picky about food.

And the study found preschool children would become fussy eaters if their dads had **depression**during those early years.

That could spark weight issues and behavioural problems, scientists warned.

The experts said: "We observed that maternal and paternal internalising problems were prospectively associated with **fussy** **eating** in preschoolers.

"For effective prevention and management of children's **fussy** **eating**, the role of parents' problems should be considered.

"Clinicians should be aware that not only severe **anxiety** and **depression**, but also milder forms of internalising problems can affect **child eating** behaviour."

The researchers did not find out what precisely was behind the link between parental **depression** and**fussy** **eating** in youngsters.

Toddlers who reject their food can be a great source of worry for parents with 30% refusing to eat certain food by the age of three.

The scientists studied almost 5,000 children born between 2002 and 2006 and their mums and dads. Parents filled in questionnaires to assess their levels of **anxiety** and **depression** mid-pregnancy and again when their **child** was three years old.

Each additional point they scored on the **anxiety** scale was associated with an extra point on the food fussiness scale.

Mothers also completed a separate quiz on their youngsters' **eating** patterns.

The fussiness study was published in the Archives of Disease in Childhood.

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