**Parents who suffer with anxiety while pregnant or when their child is a baby are more likely to have offspring who develop into fussy eaters**

* **Rejection of food while children are young can be a great source of worry**
* **Team of Dutch researchers studied 4,700 children born from 2002 and 2006**
* **Study found 30 per cent of children studied were assessed to be fussy eaters**

By [BEN SPENCER MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT FOR THE DAILY MAIL](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/search.html?s=&authornamef=Ben+Spencer+Medical+Correspondent+For+The+Daily+Mail)

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Worried parents are more likely to have children who become fussy eaters, scientists have found.

A study revealed that parents who display high levels of anxiety or depression during pregnancy or when their baby is young are more likely to have trouble getting their child to eat.

They warned that parents' 'internalising problems' may play a role in their children’s eating habits.

Rejection of food while children are young can be a great source of worry for parents, and can affect the child’s health, with the problem linked to weight issues and behavioural problems.

A team of Dutch researchers studied 4,700 children born between 2002 and 2006, and analysed the state of their parents’ emotional health.

Parents completed questionnaires to assess their levels of anxiety and depression mid-pregnancy and again when their child was three years old.

Mothers also completed a separate questionnaire on childhood eating patterns.

The study, published in the Archives of Disease in Childhood, found that 30 per cent of children studied were assessed to be fussy eaters.

Mothers who showed anxiety symptoms during pregnancy and during the preschool period were more likely to have four-year-olds who were fussy eaters, the researchers found.

Each additional point they scored on an anxiety scale was associated with an extra point on a ‘food fussiness’ scale.

Meanwhile depressive symptoms in both parents during pregnancy and three years later were also linked to fussy eating in children.

The scientists, from the MC-University Medical Centre in Rotterdam, wrote: ‘We observed that maternal and paternal internalising problems were prospectively associated with fussy eating in pre-schoolers.

‘For effective prevention and management of children’s fussy eating, the role of parents’ internalising 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.’

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-3459387/Parents-suffer-anxiety-pregnant-child-baby-likely-offspring-develop-fussy-eaters.html#ixzz49fP9Igs9>   
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