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**Babies of obese** **mothers 'twice as likely to die';**In Brief  
  
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Babies are almost twice as likely to die in the womb or during their first year of life if their mothers are obese, researchers say.

A study at Newcastle University found that 16 in 1,000 babies suffered foetal or infant death if their mothers had a body mass index (BMI) greater than 30 in early pregnancy, which is classified as obese.

Among women with a healthy BMI, which is between 18.5 and 24.5, only nine children per 1,000 died.

Dr Ruth Bell, of the university's Institute of Health and Society, said that helping women achieve a healthy weight would "give the baby the best possible start in life".