



SEARCH TIME.COM



U.S.

ADD TIME NEWS

NEWSLETTERS

Main The Page Politics Swampland Assignment Detroit The Detroit Blog
Real Clear Politics White House Photo Blog Videos

First Comes Love, Then Comes Obesity?

By BONNIE ROCHMAN Monday, Jul. 06, 2009



Illustration by John Hersey for Time
[ENLARGE +](#)

[MORE](#)

It's full-on wedding season, but anyone about to pledge to have and to hold should pay closer attention to the bit about "in sickness and in health." New research shows that within a few short years of getting hitched, married individuals are twice as likely to become obese as are people who are merely dating.

Related

Specials



9 Kid Foods to Avoid

Photos



The Busiest Wedding Day in History

Video



How to Lose Weight Like a Real Loser

The study, published in the July issue of *Obesity*, set out to determine how romantic relationships affect the tell-no-lies number on the scale. Researchers tracked changes over a handful of years in the weight and relationship status of 6,949 individuals, and their findings don't bode well for commitment. Not only are married people more likely to become obese than those who are just dating, but young people who move in with a boyfriend or girlfriend tend to pack on the pounds too. **(See pictures of the busiest wedding day in history.)**

And in a twist sure to tick off all the ladies in the house, the study notes that unmarried women who have been living with their sweeties for five years or less run a 63% increased risk of obesity. What about unmarried men? On average, they have no increased risk during cohabitation.

"With women, we saw incremental risk after one year," says Penny Gordon-Larsen, one of the two nutrition epidemiologists at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) who conducted the study. "The longer she lived with a romantic partner, the more likely she was to keep putting on weight." Meanwhile, the risk of obesity among guys — married and unmarried — spikes only between the first and second years of living together.

What's behind the weight gain? Gordon-Larsen and the paper's lead author, Natalie The, have their theories after questioning 1,293 couples for a separate part of the

[ENTER FOR A CHANCE TO WIN \\$25,000!](#)

Most Popular »

[Full List »](#)

MOST READ MOST EMAILED

1. Could the U.S.-Cuba Travel Ban End Soon?
2. Gay-Marriage Activists Look Ahead After Defeat in Maine
3. Not So Fast: Reid Signals Delay in Health Reform
4. Colbert to the Rescue: Can He Save U.S. Speedskating?
5. H1N1: Hitting the Young, Riskier for the Old
6. Republican Wins Show Dems They Are on Their Own
7. The Global Antitrust Battle Over Google's Library
8. Will a Wall Streeter Win Big at the World Series of Poker?
9. The Secrets Inside Your Dog's Mind
10. How Did the Chinese Create Snow?

Quotes of the Day »



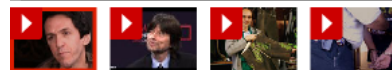
"In the U.S., people shoot up people in a shopping mall. There are crazy people everywhere."

HUMAYUN HAMIDZADA, a spokesman for Afghan President Hamid Karzai, saying the fact that an Afghan police officer killed five British soldiers in Helmand province does not indicate a problem within the Afghan police force

[More Quotes »](#)

Video

[More Videos »](#)



Mitch Albom Finds Faith in Detroit

More Related

- My Noise
- Debate Drinking Game: Nauseated in Nashville Edition
- Harry Potter Grows Older and Darker

Sponsored Links

Acai Berry EXPOSED (Official Test)

We Investigate Acai Berry. Is Acai a Miracle...
www.HealthNews4.net

Mom Makes \$67/hr Online

Mom Makes \$6,477 a month online! Read her story to find out how...
www.PACourierNews.com

[Buy a link here](#)

study. Mealtime may become more important than it was when the people were living alone. Gym memberships may not get the same workouts they did before nuptials. And maybe, after months of prepping to squeeze into crinolined and cummerbunded finery, couples just let themselves go.

(Watch TIME's video "How to Lose Hundreds of Pounds.")

Scientists have known for a while that having a close relationship with an obese person, whether a friend or a spouse, makes you more likely to become obese. So how to break the cycle? Perhaps by drawing inspiration from the same person who helped get you into this mess: your better half. Amy Gorin, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Connecticut, published a study last year that showed if one spouse participates in a weight-loss program, the unenrolled spouse tends to lose about 5 lb. Now Gorin is exploring whether

enlisting the support of spouses can help both partners shed more pounds. In June she wrapped up a 16-week pilot study of 20 couples, in one of which, the support person lost more weight than the main participant in the study.

Couples don't have to live chubbily ever after. And studies show that marriage conveys some health benefits, like living longer and being more likely to quit smoking, notes UNC's The, who lives with her boyfriend but insists her obesity findings haven't scared her away from the idea of marriage. "This is an interesting paradox," she says, "but it certainly wouldn't stop me."

See how to prevent illness at any age.

See the top 10 food trends of 2008.

Sponsored Links

Acai Berry EXPOSED (Official Test)

We Investigate Acai Berry. Is Acai a Miracle Diet or Internet Scam?
www.HealthNews4.net

Mom Makes \$67/hr Online

Mom Makes \$6,477 a month online! Read her story to find out how to do it.
www.PACourierNews.com

DON'T Pay For White Teeth






Learn the trick to turn yellow teeth white for under \$8.
USA-Daily-Herald.com

[Buy a link here](#)

[MORE](#)

Time.com on Digg

UPCOMING POPULAR TODAY

- 153  Pair Stole Up to 1,000 Bags at Arizona Airport
- 132  Not So Fast: Reid Signals Delay in Health Reform
- 119  Hunting for Tuna: The Environmental Peril Grows
- 39  Swine Flu: H1N1 Hits the Young, but Riskier for the Old - TI
- 32  Could the U.S.-Cuba Travel Ban End Soon?


Get the TIME.com BlackBerry App!

Download the **FREE** app now at app.time.com

[Download now](#)



Get 4 Free Preview Issues!

 Full Name State

Address Zip Code

City [CLICK HERE](#)

More News from Our Partners

- Bodies of 3 students discovered
- "This Loan Is An Example Of What Went Wrong In America"
- Venezuela: Gays Attacked, Harassed By Police
- Sesame Street Mocks "Pox News," Conservative Blogger Not Amused (VIDEO)
- Elderly Most Likely to Die From H1N1
- Town Imposes 3-Cat Ownership Limit
- To Infinity and Beyond (Via Elevator)
- John Hurt Talks Harry Potter, Quentin Crisp and Alien - The RT Interview
- Total Recall: George Clooney's Best Movies
- 12 Facts About 2012
- Grant Park: The Night Obama Won
- The iPhone-Operated Car
- Inside Gitmo: Seven Years On

Related Stories

- Do Obese Kids Become Obese Adults?
- Is It O.K. to Be Pudgy?
- What's the Best Diet? Eating Less Food

Top Stories on TIME.com

- In Iran, New Protests But an Increasingly Hard Line