

# Genes and obesity: Fast food is not only culprit in expanding waistlines - DNA is also to blame

Researchers at UCLA say it's not just what you eat that makes those pants tighter - it's also genetics. In a new study, scientists discovered that body-fat responses to a typical fast-food diet are determined in large part by genetic factors, and they have identified several genes they say may control those responses.



(Image: UCLA)

The study is the first of its kind to detail metabolic responses to a high-fat, high-sugar diet in a large and diverse mouse population under defined environmental conditions, modelling closely what is likely to occur in human populations. The researchers found that the amount of food consumed contributed only modestly to the degree of obesity.

The findings were published on 8 January in the online edition of the journal *Cell Metabolism* and appeared on 9 January in the print version.

'Our research demonstrates that body-fat responses to high-fat, high-sugar diets have a very strong genetic component, and we have identified several genetic factors potentially regulating these responses,' said first author Dr. Brian Parks, a postdoctoral researcher at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. 'We found that obesity has similar genetic signatures in mice and humans, indicating the mice are a highly relevant model system to study obesity. Overall, our work has broad implications concerning the genetic nature of obesity and weight gain.' [Read the rest of the article.](#)

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