

"Long before it's in the papers"

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A moment on the lips, a year on the hips

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Courtesy of BioMed Central
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Just a few weeks of overeating may affect your weight and fat storage years later—even if you lost the weight you initially added, scientists are reporting.

A study published in the research journal *Nutrition & Metabolism* found that a four-week episode of increased energy intake and decreased exercise can cause higher weight and fat mass more than two years later.

The researchers, Åsa Ernérsson and colleagues at Linköping University in Sweden, studied 18 people who agreed to cap their physical activity and to eat in excess. The group increased their energy intake by an average of 70 percent for a month.

A separate control group ate and exercised as normal.

The overeating group gained an average of 6.4 kg (14 lb.) which was mostly lost within six months. Yet a year later, they still showed an increased fat mass, the investigators said; the differences were even greater after two and a half years.

The study suggests a short period of gluttony and limited exercise may change your physiology, causing it to be harder to lose and keep off weight, Ernérsson said. "The long-term difference in body weight in the intervention and control groups suggests that there is an extended effect on fat mass after a short period of large food consumption and minimal exercise."