

Exposure to chemicals used in plastics may be linked with childhood obesity, according to results from a long-term health study on girls who live in East Harlem and surrounding communities that were presented to community leaders on Thursday by researchers at Mount Sinai Medical Center.

The chemicals in question are called phthalates, which are used to to make plastics pliable and in personal care products. Phthalates, which are absorbed into the body, are a type of endocrine disruptor — chemicals that affect glands and hormones that regulate many bodily functions. They have raised concerns as possible carcinogens for more than a decade, but attention over their role in obesity is relatively recent.

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