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Breastfed Infants, Better Muscles In Teens

Friday, January 7, 2011

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GRANADA, Spain, Jan. 7 (UPI) -- Infants who were breastfed were found to be in better physical condition as adolescents, researchers in Spain discovered.

Study leader Enrique Garcia Artero of the University of Granada and colleagues asked the parents of 2,567 adolescents about their child's feeding as infants. In addition, the teens conducted physical tests to evaluate aerobic capacities and muscular strength.

The study published in the Journal of Nutrition shows the teens who were breastfed as babies had stronger leg muscles than those who were not breastfed. Additionally, muscular leg strength was greater in the teens who were breastfed for a longer period of time.

Teens who were breastfed exclusively or in combination with other types of food had better performance in horizontal jumping in both boys and girls regardless of fat mass, height of the adolescent or the amount of muscle.

The teens breastfed from three to six months had half the risk of low performance in the jump exercise when compared with those who had never been breastfed.

"Our results concur with the observations made as regards other neonatal factors, such as weight at birth, are positively related to better muscular condition during adolescence," Artero said in a statement.