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Health V

## People Who Live to Be Over 100 Tend to be Born in the Fall

*Autumn is a beautiful time of year. The leaves are changing, the weather is becoming crisp and cool and it's also the season you want to be born in if you want to live to be over 100.*

BY [CHARLES POLADIAN](#) | JULY 13, 2012

Autumn is a beautiful time of year. The leaves are changing, the weather is becoming crisp and cool and it's also the season you want to be born in if you want to live to be over 100.

In a new study, more Americans who lived past their 100th birthday were more likely to be born in the fall than any other season. The research also found that if you were born in March or the spring months you were less likely to live past 100.



Photo: Microsoft

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The study was led by Leonid A. Gavrilov, PhD, and Natalia S. Gavrilova, PhD, of the University of Chicago. The researchers used data collected on the 1,574 confirmed Americans centenarians who were born between 1880 and 1895. The numbers were compared to their 10,855 siblings, who lived shorter lives, and 1,083 as a control and as a way to eliminate possible environmental or genetic factors.

The researchers discovered that what month you were born either increased or decreased the odds that you would live past 100. If you were born in September, October or November, you had a higher chance of living past 100. If you were born



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in March, April, May, June or July chances are you'd be falling short of blowing out 100 candles.

When compared to the 1900 census, 51.8 percent of the general population was born in the first half of the year while 53.12 percent of centenarians were born in the second half of the year. Surprisingly, these numbers reinforce past studies.

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Previous studies have shown that people born at the end of the year, from September to December, had higher life expectancy than those born in other months.

Researchers are unsure why being born later in the year increases your odds of living longer but there could be several factors involved. A mother's nutritional status can affect fetal development which could affect how long you live. Previous studies have shown that babies born in the fall and winter had increased birth weights which may also affect early development.

Infections and diseases also have peak seasons. Infectious diseases, such as flu season for example, have months where incidence is higher than other times of the year. Poliovirus, not researchers, had higher rates of incidence during July and August.

For these reasons, researchers believe that fall babies have better odds of living to be 100. Being born in the fall also means you avoid the freezing cold of winter or the hot summer sun. Fall babies also avoid infections which are more common in the winter, spring and summer and mothers may also be eating better leading to healthier babies.

There are some limitations to the study, including the fact that the results may not reflect a random population sample. That issue is not critical to the overall hypothesis of the study which is analyzing the possible effect of birth month on longevity.

For fall babies, you may just have to get a larger cake to fit all those candles.

The study was published in the *Journal of Aging Research*.

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