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Secret of a long life revealed

By **EMMA MORTON**
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THE first-born children of mums aged under 25 are **TWICE** as likely to live to 100 than other kids, doctors said yesterday.

Their study shows that long life is linked to the order of birth and age of your mother.

Researchers studied the life spans of 1,000 people who had lived to 100.

They found they were 1.7 times more likely than brothers and sisters to reach 100 if they were first-born.

But if their mums gave birth before the age of 25 they had double the chance of living to 100. Study leader Natalia Gavrilova said that longevity was down to the fact that the younger women's eggs were in much better health.

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She added: "If the best, most vigorous maternal ova cells are used first very early in life this could explain why particularly young mothers produce particularly long-lived children."

The findings come after life expectancy for adults has risen sharply in the past 50 years.

Men lived on average until 67 and women 73 in the 1950s — compared with the mid-70s for men and early 80s for women in 2005.

Doctors have attributed this to better healthcare, nutrition and the fact that diseases like TB and polio have been almost wiped out.

The Chicago University research — published in New Scientist magazine — was based on centenarians living in North America. All were born between 1875 and 1899.

Researchers pieced together their family histories and compared them all for common factors.

Experts believe that younger mums are less likely to acquire infections that could harm a foetus.

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