Hubble shows stars have weight limit

By Chris Kridler, Florida Today

Stars appear to have a weight limit, a Hubble Space Telescope study shows.

Stars seem to max out at about 150 times the mass of our sun. Astronomers Don Figer of the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore examined a cluster of stars in our own Milky Way galaxy to make the conclusion.

Massive clusters previously were thought to have massive stars, but Figer's study found a cutoff point. The finding was published in today's issue of Nature.

Mass isn't the same as size; a light star sometimes is larger than a dense, small one.

If one of these massive stars was at the center of our solar system, it would appear 25 times as big as the sun and very, very bright, Woosley said. "The Earth would boil and be vaporized," he said.

Today's Top Tech Stories

• Leak plugged on high-def DVDs - 5:38 PM
• Pulling plug on Net service not easy - 12:39 PM
• Yahoo, SanDisk team on wireless MP3 player - 11:06 AM
• AOL will target Google search ads on its sites - 10:58 AM
• Teen accused of Web escort service - 8:12 AM

Copyright 2008 USA TODAY, a division of Gannett Co. Inc.