Bacteria in infants' first stool may indicate their risk of obesity

8 July 2020

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Meconium—the earliest stool of an infant—is composed of materials ingested during the time the infant spends in the uterus. A new study published in *Pediatric Obesity* found that the types of normal bacteria found in the meconium may predict an infant's likelihood of later developing obesity.

In the study of 212 newborns, children who became overweight at 3 years of age differed in their meconium bacterial makeup from those with normal weight, having a higher proportion of bacteria in the Bacteroidetes phylum (29% versus 15%).

"The concept of fetal microbiome is controversial and the colonization process after birth is better understood than the possible fetal colonization; however, there are many prenatal factors affecting the microbial composition of the baby's first stool, such as the mother's use of antibiotics during pregnancy and biodiversity of the home environment during pregnancy," said corresponding author Katja Korpela, MD, of the University of Oulu, in Finland. "It is very interesting that the microbiome formed before birth is possibly linked to a child's subsequent weight status."

More information: Katja Korpela et al, Microbiome of the first stool and overweight at age 3 years: A prospective cohort study, *Pediatric Obesity* (2020). DOI: 10.1111/ijpo.12680

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