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**Early-life diet and risk of inflammatory bowel disease: a pooled study in two Scandinavian birth cohorts**

Guo A, Ludvigsson J, Brantsaeter A, et al. [Early-life diet and risk of inflammatory bowel disease: a pooled study in two Scandinavian birth cohorts](https://gut.bmj.com/content/73/4/590). Gut 2024; 73: 590-600. doi: 10.1136/gutjnl-2023-330971.

While the antigenic stimuli for development of IBD remains unknown, there has been growing focus on potential dietary triggers - particularly how early-life diet may help shape the gut microbiome in individuals and potentially affect likelihood of developing IBD.

In this publication, Guo et al., prospectively recorded 1-year and 3-year data from questionnaires relating to children in the “All babies in Southeast Sweden and the Norwegian Mother, Father and Child cohort study”. The quality of diet was assessed using a healthy eating index and by assessing the frequency of intake of certain food groups. While development of IBD required corroboration by more than 2 national patient registers.

With over 1.3 million patient years of follow-up data, from 81,820 participants throughout childhood and adolescence, there were 307 confirmed diagnoses of IBD. Both “medium and high quality” diets were associated with reduced likelihood of developing IBD, compared to “low quality” diets. Other factors associated with reduced likelihood of developing IBD were higher levels of fish intake, higher vegetable intake and lower levels of sugar-sweetened beverages. However importantly diet quality at 3-years was not associated with development of IBD in this cohort.

This study provides important clues about associations of certain dietary patterns and possible associations with development of IBD. However, further prospective studies are needed to further validate these findings and ultimately interventional trials to modify diet will be critical to determine whether dietary modification can actually be used in the future to potentially reduce the risk of developing IBD.