



19 SEP, 2019

Gut health an accident of birth

West Australian, Perth

Gut health an accident of birth

Babies born naturally have different gut bacteria than those delivered by caesarean, new research has found.

In the largest study into newborn microbiota, Melbourne researchers found babies born vaginally got most of their gut bacteria from their mums' gut — not the birth canal. C-section infants, however, carried more bacteria commonly found in a hospital environment.

Lead researcher Dr Samuel Forster, from the Hudson Institute of Medical Research, said they were preparing to recruit 20,000 babies to study the ideal make-up of gut bacteria and see if this difference in the newborn period affected long-term health.

The researchers studied gut bacteria from 600 UK babies over the first 21 days of life via stool samples. They were tested again at eight months. While the mix of bacteria was similar when the children reached infancy, there were clear differences in that first month after birth.