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Birth size is a risk factor for future obesity. A new study shows that probiotic supplementation and dietary counseling during pregnancy may reduce the risk of gestational diabetes and the risk of large birth size.

PROBIOTIC SUPPLEMENTS & DIETARY COUNSELING DURING PREGNANCY REDUCES FUTURE METABOLIC SYNDROME RISK

In a recent study published in the *British Journal of Nutrition*, researchers found that probiotic supplements and dietary counseling could help reduce the risk of diabetes and metabolic syndrome during pregnancy.

The study included 256 women, all of whom were normally healthy and had no chronic diseases. During the first trimester, the participants were randomized into control and dietary intervention groups. The dietary intervention group was given intense nutritional counseling by a nutritionist, and then further divided into two groups: one receiving probiotic supplements and the other a placebo. The probiotic capsules were taken from the beginning of the intervention (first trimester) through the end of exclusive breast-feeding.

Pregnancy outcomes and fetal and infant growth were analyzed during the two years of follow-up. No adverse events were reported and all pregnancies were of normal duration.

Women who had taken probiotic supplements had a reduced frequency of gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM): 13 percent for the diet/probiotics group, compared to 36 percent for the diet/placebo group and 34 percent for the control group. Dietary counseling during pregnancy also reduced the risk of increased birth size in both groups, reducing the likelihood of future obesity.

The results of this study indicate that probiotic supplements and dietary counseling during pregnancy can be a safe and effective way to approach the epidemic of metabolic syndrome.

Luoto R, et al. Impact of maternal probiotic-supplemented dietary counselling on pregnancy outcome and prenatal and postnatal growth: a double-blind, placebo-controlled study. 2010. *Br J Nutr* 103(12):1792-9.