

Bottle-feeding may raise baby's risk for intestinal trouble

September 3 2012, by Steven Reinberg, Healthday Reporter



Study found chances for serious condition called pyloric stenosis increased by almost 5 times.

(HealthDay)—Infants who are bottle-fed face a higher risk of developing a serious intestinal condition that can lead to surgery, Danish researchers report.

With pyloric stenosis, the lower part of the baby's stomach narrows and restricts the amount of food the infant gets, and results in forceful [vomiting](#), [dehydration](#) and salt and fluid imbalances. The reason it develops is unknown, but bottle-feeding has been suggested as a possible risk factor, the study authors noted.

"Bottle-feeding is a rather strong risk factor for pyloric stenosis, and this adds to the evidence supporting the advantage of exclusive breast-feeding in the first months of life," said lead researcher Dr. Camilla

Krogh, from the department of epidemiology research at the Statens [Serum](#) Institute in Copenhagen.

Pyloric stenosis is a severe and potentially fatal condition, Krogh added. "It is the most common cause of gastrointestinal obstruction in [early childhood](#), and the most common condition requiring surgery in the first months of life," she explained.

"Although treatment of pyloric stenosis has been known for almost 100 years, its etiology [cause] remains unclear. The results of this study contributes with new insight into the etiology of pyloric stenosis and brings us closer to solving the enigma of pyloric stenosis development," Krogh added.

The report was published online Sept. 3 and in the October print issue of [Pediatrics](#).

To look at the connection between bottle-feeding and pyloric stenosis, Krogh's group used data on more than 70,000 infants to identify 65 who had to have surgery for pyloric stenosis. Of these infants, 29 had been bottle-fed.

The researchers found bottle-feeding increased the odds of developing pyloric stenosis 4.6-fold.

Moreover, the risk was seen even when the baby was breast-fed before being bottle-fed and it started within 30 days after bottle-feeding began, they noted.

Commenting on the study, Dr. Jesse Reeves-Garcia, director of pediatric gastroenterology at Miami Children's Hospital, said that "there is a lot not known about this disease."

Although this finding only shows an association between bottle-feeding and pyloric stenosis, and not a cause-and-effect link, it suggests that breast milk is protective against this disease, he added.

"Breast-feeding is really best for the kids," Reeves-Garcia said. "Breast milk has a lot of things formula doesn't have."

More information: For more information on pyloric stenosis, visit the [Nemours Foundation](#).

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Citation: Bottle-feeding may raise baby's risk for intestinal trouble (2012, September 3) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-09-bottle-feeding-baby-intestinal.html>

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