

# Research finds no evidence probiotics offer benefit during pregnancy

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A systematic review of the use of probiotics during pregnancy on pregnancy-related conditions found no evidence that probiotics had any effect on the conditions.

[Published](#) today in the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology Maternal-Fetal Medicine*, the research analyzed trials of thousands of women who took probiotics during pregnancy and the impact on pregnancy-related conditions, including preeclampsia.

Probiotics are usually taken as a standalone supplement or fortified food and are sometimes used by women during pregnancy.

Burnet Senior Research Officer and one of the study's lead authors Dr. Annie McDougall said the research team analyzed data from 29 [clinical trials](#) to assess the efficacy and safety of probiotic use during pregnancy.

"Our research, which analyzed trials involving more than 7000 pregnant women, found there was no benefit of probiotics on any pregnancy-related conditions," she said.

"This paper shows there is no evidence that probiotics should be prescribed during pregnancy to improve pregnancy-related outcomes."

Dr. McDougall said more research was needed into the effects of [probiotic](#) use during pregnancy on preeclampsia and other conditions, but the research had revealed other interesting findings.

"One of the surprising findings from our research was the role of gut microbiome in pregnant women who are under-nourished or live in places with [poor sanitation](#)," she said.

"There is still a lot that remains unknown about the impact of gut microbiome on pregnancy-related conditions and more research is needed before specific guidelines for pregnancy can be developed."

"We are hoping to build on this research to learn more about the impact of gut microbiome during pregnancy in under-nourished populations and

in low- to middle-income countries."

The study is part of broader research being conducted through the Accelerating Innovation for Mothers (AIM) project, which is focused on improving maternal and infant health globally and reducing maternal and infant deaths. The project aims to find innovative medicines, devices, and diagnostics for pregnancy-specific conditions such as preeclampsia, preterm labor, and impaired [fetal growth](#) in low- and [middle-income countries](#).

As a result of this study, the AIM team is now working towards developing target product profiles (TPPs) on interventions for [pregnant women](#) who have gut microbiome dysfunction.

**More information:** Annie McDougall et al, The effects of probiotics administration during pregnancy on preeclampsia and associated maternal, fetal, and newborn outcomes: a systematic review and meta-analysis, *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology MFM* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.ajogmf.2024.101322](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajogmf.2024.101322)

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