

# Bifidobacteria supplement colonizes gut of breastfed infants

10 June 2018, by Andy Fell



Supplementing breastfed infants with activated *Bifidobacterium infantis* has a positive effect on their gut microbes, UC Davis researchers found. The microbes are associated with health benefits. Credit: Karin Higgins/UC Davis

Supplementing breastfed infants with activated *Bifidobacterium infantis* (*B. infantis*) bacteria had a positive impact on babies' gut microbes for up to a year, according to a recent study by researchers at the University of California, Davis and Evolve BioSystems Inc. The work will be presented June 9 at the annual meeting of the American Society for Nutrition in Boston by Bethany Henrick, director of immunology and diagnostics at Evolve BioSystems, on behalf of the study co-investigator, Jennifer Smilowitz, associate director of human studies research at UC Davis' Foods For Health Institute.

The presence of *B. infantis* in the intestines of infants is associated with health benefits and these bacteria are nourished by breast milk. However, these beneficial bacteria are present at significantly lower levels in breastfed infants in developed countries than in developing countries.

Mothers and infants in the study received either a *B. infantis* preparation and lactation support, or lactation support alone, from seven to 21 days after birth. The bacteria quickly established themselves in the babies, crowding out other gut [bacteria](#) that are associated with intestinal problems and immune-related diseases such as asthma, allergy and autoimmune disease. Furthermore, supplementation with *B. infantis* also changed the biochemical composition of infant feces. These beneficial changes lasted for up to a year in babies that were primarily breastfed.

These results suggest a possible method to improve gut microbiome health and prevent immune-related diseases in breastfed [infants](#) in developed countries.

**More information:** Title: *Bifidobacterium longum* subsp. *infantis* stably restores the infant gut microbiome over the first year of life  
Session: Nutritional Microbiology: Influencing the Gut Microbiome through Diet and Lifestyle Choices to Impact Health  
Time: Saturday, June 9, 1 p.m.

Provided by UC Davis

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