Study Finds Childhood Diet Effects Microbiome into Adulthood, Even After a Change in Diet

A new study has shown that the effects of a poor diet as a child can affect the microbiome well into adulthood, even after you switch to a healthier diet.

> *"We studied mice, but the effect we observed is equivalent to kids having a Western diet, high in fat and sugar and their gut microbiome still being affected up to six years after puberty," explained UCR evolutionary physiologist Theodore Garland.*
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> *Study finds childhood diet has lifelong impact*

The study, published in the Journal of Experimental Biology, examined the effects of different diets on mice. Mice were divided into four groups, half were fed with the standard diet, considered healthy, and half were fed the unhealthy diet, and then within those two groups, mice were divided into groups with access to a running wheel, and groups without.

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After three weeks all mice were returned to the standard diet and no exercise. At 14 weeks, the mice's diversity and abundance of bacteria were examined.

The group found that certain beneficial bacteria were lacking in the group fed the "unhealthy" diet. Researchers saw a significant decrease in the number and diversity of gut bacteria in the mature mice who had been fed an unhealthy diet.

It’s likely that the “healthy” diet that the mice were put on after the unhealthy diet, did not promote gut diversity, as it was said the diet was the standard diet for lab mice. To further see the effects of a poor diet on the microbiome, they should feed mice an unhealthy diet, and then split that group up and feed one group a “standard” diet, and another group, a diet that promotes gut diversity.

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