Microbiome remains malleable after birth

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Trillions of bacteria – and other tiny single-celled organisms, such as archaea and protozoa – live in our bodies, largely in our gut. They're estimated to outnumber the actual cells of "our" bodies.

This ecosystem of tiny creatures we carry around with us is thought to have profound effects on our health.

The Human Microbiome Project says that the makeup of an animal's microbiome has an impact on its immune systems, heart health, and behaviour, among other things.

It's thought that early life events, notably birth and breastfeeding, might affect our microbiomes. People who are born by caesarean section seem to be slightly more at risk of obesity, asthma, and some immune conditions. It's thought that being born vaginally exposes the child to the mother's microbes. It's a similar story with breastfeeding.

Now a new study has found that the effects of these early events don't last as long as previously thought.

The Flemish Gut Flora Project (FGFP) looked at the intestinal microbiomes of more than 1,000 people. "We studied the microbiota of adult individuals in Belgium," Dr Jeroen Raes, one of the study's authors, told BuzzFeed News. "It's one of the largest studies worldwide."

The study found found no difference in the diversity of the microbiomes of adults who'd been born via caesarean and adults who hadn't. Similarly, breastfeeding seemed to make no difference.

Read full, original post: The "Friendly" Bacteria In Your Gut Isn't As Set At Birth As We Thought