Pregnancy warning: Fatty foods 'could damage babies’ immune systems'

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PREGNANT women who eat fatty foods could damage their babies’ immune systems, research suggests.

Those microbes can affect the development of immune systems and ability to extract energy from food.

Over 150 pregnant women answered a questionnaire to estimate how much sugar, fat and fibre they consumed.

The researchers believe the findings could encourage pregnant women to watch their fat intake.

Dr Kjersti Aagaard, from Baylor College of Medicine, Texas, said: "We then examined the babies' first stool sample to determine the type of bacteria present at birth in the infants' gut.

"We used 16S rRNA sequencing to determine the types of microbes present in stools.

"We analysed the stools again when the babies reached four to six weeks of age."

The authors of the study believe the new findings could encourage pregnant women to keep an eye on their fat intake.

Dr Aagaard added: "Diet is very amenable to change and women are highly motivated to make healthy changes during pregnancy.

"Traditionally, dietary interventions during pregnancy have focused on micronutrients, such as iron and folic acid.

"We speculate that there may be a sound argument to also discuss and estimate fat intake."

The study is in Genome Medicine.