

NUTRITION

Vegetable intake during pregnancy and islet autoimmunity in offspring

Daily maternal consumption of vegetables during pregnancy negatively correlates with islet autoimmunity in children up to 5 years of age, suggest the findings of a Swedish longitudinal cohort study.

To identify individuals in the general pediatric population at risk of future development of type 1 diabetes mellitus (T1DM), mothers of 5,724 children born between 1997 and 1999 answered a questionnaire about frequency of consumption of 22 food items during pregnancy. Blood samples from the children were analyzed for the presence of three islet autoantibodies (insulin, glutamic acid decarboxylase 65 [also known as glutamate decarboxylase 2] and insulinoma-associated protein 2) at 1, 2.5 and 5 years of age.

A diagnosis of T1DM during the 5-year follow-up or positive testing for two or more autoantibodies was defined as islet autoimmunity and compared

between the intake frequency categories of different foods.

Maternal vegetable intake 3–5 days per week was associated with a higher risk of islet autoimmunity in the child compared with daily vegetable consumption.

“Vegetable intake could be a marker for some other protective factor such as a healthy lifestyle, but the association did not change when adjusting for known risk factors for diabetes including the mothers’ education level,” says investigator Hilde Brekke (Göteborg University, Sweden). “Our results support the recommendations that pregnant women should include vegetables in their daily diet.”

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