DIET QUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE AND LATER RISK OF INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE: A TRI-NATIONAL BIRTH COHORT STUDY

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UEG Week Barcelona 2026 | Presentation

Paediatrics | Small Intestine & Nutrition | IBD | Gut Microbiota

October 20, 2026

Higher diet quality in adolescence (ages 11–14 years) was associated with a 31% lower risk of developing IBD, particularly Crohn's disease, in a tri-national Scandinavian birth cohort study of over 137,000 children.

KEY POINTS

- Among 137,179 individuals followed for 1,894,582 person-years, 811 developed IBD; high versus low diet quality at ages 11–14 was associated with an adjusted hazard ratio of 0.69 (95% CI 0.51–0.93) for IBD.
- The protective association was strongest for Crohn's disease at ages 11–14 years (aHR 0.66, 95% CI 0.44–0.99), while the association for ulcerative colitis did not reach statistical significance (aHR 0.71, 95% CI 0.48–1.07).
- High versus low diet diversity at ages 11–14 was associated with a borderline significant reduction in IBD risk (aHR 0.76, 95% CI 0.58–1.00).
- Joint modeling of longitudinal diet quality across childhood and adolescence showed that higher overall diet quality was associated with reduced risk of both IBD (aHR 0.87, 95% CI 0.78–0.97) and Crohn's disease (aHR 0.87, 95% CI 0.78–0.94).
- Diet quality was measured using a modified Healthy Eating Index at ages 7–8 and 11–14 years, with exposures categorized into tertiles and analyses adjusted for sex, IBD heredity, and socioeconomic status.

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