

**For Immediate Release**

## **PolyU Study: Close to 90% of C-Section Babies Experience Illness Before the Age of 1 Scholars Recommend Continued Breastfeeding**

*Cesarbiotic Formula reduced the number of illness incidence, Boosts Disease Resistance by nearly Three-Fold*

**HONG KONG, 24 MAY 2024** - Two in five newborns in Hong Kong were delivered by C-section. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) study commissioned by Danone focuses on the long-term correlation between the eating habits of C-section babies and their growth needs. The study reveals that close to 90% of C-section babies have fallen ill before the age of one, and they fall ill more often. A comparison between C-section babies who consume different formulas for 12 months has shown that those who consume Cesarbiotic Formula reduced the number of times they fall sick, and boost disease resistance by nearly three-fold.

PolyU pointed out that breast milk is the best source of nutrition, including probiotics for infants. Probiotics help establish a healthy gut ecosystem and reduce the risk of illness. Dr Chiou Jiachi, Associate Director of the Research Institute for Future Food, Associate Professor for Department of Food Science and Nutrition at PolyU, said, “This is the first real-world study to understand the relationship between the feeding method and the development of the gut ecosystem. Hong Kong has one of the highest rates of C-section deliveries in Asia. We hope to provide useful information for the parents so their babies can develop a healthy gut ecosystem.”

The study revealed C-section babies consumed Cesarbiotic Formula in the first two weeks of life had more beneficial bacteria in the gut compared to C-section babies consumed regular formula. The dysbiosis of gut microbiota may affect immune development in babies, making them more susceptible to illness. The study also found, C-section babies who consumed Cesarbiotic Formula for 12 months boost disease resistance by nearly three-fold. The findings also showed, babies consumed Cesarbiotic Formula, the chances of not experiencing upper respiratory diseases, gut

diseases and allergies are higher than those who consume regular formulas. The likelihood of them taking antibiotics is lower than those who consume regular formulas.

Pediatrician Dr. Yim Sau Wing states: "Studies have pointed out that, compared to babies born through natural childbirth, babies delivered by C-section have a relatively higher risk of infection and illness. Babies born by C-section do not come into contact with the beneficial bacteria in the birth canal during the birthing process, leading to an imbalance in their gut microbiome - the harmful bacteria outnumber the beneficial bacteria, which can make them more susceptible to infections, allergies, respiratory tract issues, e.g. asthma and gastrointestinal conditions, such as diarrhea and constipation. Therefore, if we can increase and continuously supplement the beneficial gut bacteria in C-section babies, there is a chance to boost their immunity and reduce their frequency of getting sick."

"Breastmilk provides the best and most suitable nutrition and probiotics for babies. But if breastmilk is insufficient, parents can consider specialized formula containing the beneficial bacteria strains and prebiotics, which can help supplement the gut microbiota in C-section babies. Research shows this could help reduce their risk of illness and allergies. Studies have also found that even for C-section babies beyond 1 year old, supplementing with probiotics and prebiotics can enhance the balance of the gut microbiome, and this may help establish long-term immune protection. Each baby has different needs at different stages of growth, so it's recommended to consult a doctor to choose the appropriate feeding method," Dr. Yim added.

In 2021, PolyU launched a study on infants' health needs based on different delivery and feeding methods; the study is now in its third phase. In the first phase, the Bifidobacterial in C-section babies was almost nowhere to be found. Bifidobacteria is a crucial beneficial bacteria for promoting good gut health and proper immune development in babies. In the second phase, the study found that the effectiveness of different formula milk in supplying gut microbiota to C-section babies varies by up to 40 times. The third phase observed the growth condition of C-section babies for 12 months. It was discovered that those babies are more likely to fall ill. Compared to C-section babies consumed regular formula, those consumed Cesarbiotic Formula reduced the number of times they fall sick, and boost disease resistance by nearly three-fold.

# *'Disease Resistance'* refer to reduce number of illness

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