CLAIMS

1. A method of determining whether an offspring of a pregnant mother is susceptible to developing an allergic disease, the method comprising detecting the level of bacteria of *Prevotella 9* in a faecal sample from the pregnant mother, wherein the absence of detectable Prevotella 9 or the presence of low levels of Prevotella 9 indicates that the offspring is susceptible to developing an allergic disease.

2. Use of the method of claim 1, to determine whether a pregnant mother should be treated to increase the level of bacteria of *Prevotella 9* in their gut.

3. Use of the method of claim 1, to determine whether a pregnant mother has been effectively treated to increase the level of bacteria of *Prevotella 9* in their gut.

4. Use of a bacterial composition comprising *Prevotella* in the manufacture of a medicament for minimizing the likelihood of development of allergy in offspring of a female individual, wherein the medicament is to be administered to the female individual, wherein the *Prevotella* is *Prevotella_9*, species X or species Y.

5. The use of claim 4, wherein the medicament is to be administered to the female individual 1 to 3 month prior to her falling pregnant.

6. The use of claim 4 or 5, wherein the medicament is to be administered to the female individual in the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd trimester or in all trimesters.

7. The use of any one of claims 4 to 6, wherein the medicament is to be administered at least 2 months before delivery.

8. The use of any one of claims 5 to 7, wherein the *Prevotella* is to provide from 1 x 10^6 to 1 x 10^{11} colony forming units (cfu) per day to the female individual.

9. The use of any one of claims 4 to 8, wherein the medicament is to be administered to the female individual once or twice daily, or once every 2 or 3 days, or once weekly.

10. The use of any one of claims 4 to 9, wherein the medicament is formulated for oral administration, or is in the form of a food or beverage.

11. A composition comprising *Prevotella*, and a further ingredient that is beneficial for a pregnant or lactating woman, wherein the further ingredient is folate or vitamin D3, wherein the *Prevotella* is *Prevotella_9*, species X or species Y.

12. The composition of claim 11, further comprising a digestible carbohydrate.

13. The method of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the level of the *Prevotella* 9 bacteria is detected by a nucleic-acid-based detection assay.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the nucleic-acid-based-detection assay targets a *Prevotella* 9 16S ribosomal nucleic acid region of SEQ ID NO: 1:

TACGGAAGGTCCGGGCGTTATCCGGATTTATTGGGTTTAAAGGGAGCGTAGGCCGGAGA
TTAAGCGTGTTGTGAAATGTAGACGCTCAACGTCTGCACTGCAGCGCGAACTGGTTTCCTTGAG
TACGCACAAAGTGGGCGGAATTCGTGGTGTAGCGGTGAAATGCTTAGATATCACGAAGAACTCC

GATTGCGAAGGCAGCTCACTGGAGCGCAACTGACGCTGAAGCTCGAAAGTGCGGGTATCGAACA
GG (SEQ ID NO: 1); or wherein the nucleic-acid-based-detection assay targets a *Prevotella* 9 16S ribosomal nucleic acid region of SEQ ID NO: 1 and a *Prevotella* 9 16S ribosomal nucleic acid region of SEQ ID NO:2:

TACGTATGGTGCAAGCGTTATCCGGATTTATTGGGTTTAAAGGGAGCGTAGGCCGGAGATTAAG
CGTGTTGTGAAATGTAGATGCTCAACATCTGAACTGCAGCGCGAACTGGTTTCCTTGAGTACGC
ACAAAGTGGGCGGAATTCGTGGTGTAGCGGTGAAATGCTTAGATATCACGAAGAACTCCGATTG
CGAAGGCAGCTCACTGGAGCGCAACTGACGCTGAAGCTCGAAAGTGCGGGTATCGAACAGG
(SEQ ID NO:2).

15. The method or use according to any one of claims 1 to 14, wherein the *Prevotella* 9 bacteria is *Prevotella copri*.

16. The method according to any one of claims 1 to 3 or 13 to 15, or the use according to any one of claims 4 to 10 or 15, wherein the allergic disease is selected from allergic rhinitis, food allergy, atopic dermatitis, asthma, atopic wheeze or combination thereof.

17. A kit for determining the level of bacteria of *Prevotella 9* in a sample, when used in the method according to any one of claims 1 to 3 or 13 to 15, the kit comprising primers specific for *Prevotella* 9.

18. The kit of claim 17, wherein the primers are specific for *Prevotella* 9 species X 16S ribosomal nucleic acid region of SEQ ID NO: 1:

TACGGAAGGTCCGGGCGTTATCCGGATTTATTGGGTTTAAAGGGAGCGTAGGCCGGAGATTAAG
CGTGTTGTGAAATGTAGACGCTCAACGTCTGCACTGCAGCGCGAACTGGTTTCCTTGAGTACGC
ACAAAGTGGGCGGAATTCGTGGTGTAGCGGTGAAATGCTTAGATATCACGAAGAACTCCGATTG
CGAAGGCAGCTCACTGGAGCGCAACTGACGCTGAAGCTCGAAAGTGCGGGTATCGAACAGG
(SEQ ID NO: 1); or

wherein the primers are specific for *Prevotella* 9 species X 16S ribosomal nucleic acid region of SEQ ID NO: 1 and specific for *Prevotella* 9 species Y 16S ribosomal nucleic acid region of SEQ ID NO: 2:

TACGTATGGTGCAAGCGTTATCCGGATTTATTGGGTTTAAAGGGAGCGTAGGCCGGAGATTAAG
CGTGTTGTGAAATGTAGATGCTCAACATCTGAACTGCAGCGCGAACTGGTTTCCTTGAGTACGC
ACAAAGTGGGCGGAATTCGTGGTGTAGCGGTGAAATGCTTAGATATCACGAAGAACTCCGATTG
CGAAGGCAGCTCACTGGAGCGCAACTGACGCTGAAGCTCGAAAGTGCGGGTATCGAACAGG
(SEQ ID NO: 2.