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Why You Should Measure Your Vitamin D Prior To Or During Pregnancy

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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Hello, I'm Professor James Adams. I'm a professor at Arizona State University, and the CO leader of this pregnancy summit, and I'm also the chair of the science advisory board neurological Health Foundation. With me today is Dr. Debby Hamilton. She's an integrative pediatrician over 25 years of medical experience, and also has special training in nutrition, which is rare for physicians. And we're going to talk with you and she's also the CO leader of this pregnancy summit. And she's also an active member of the science advisory board for the neurological Health Foundation. So welcome, Debby.

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So thank you, thank you for speaking with me today.

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So today we're gonna talk about vitamin D and why it's so important during pregnancy. Can you tell us first of all a little bit why vitamin D is generally important?

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Well, vitamin D is an interesting vitamin, it's fat soluble, but it's also almost acts like a hormone



in the body. So it affects a lot of different parts of the body. So people think about vitamin D with bones. Think about if you have low vitamin D, especially in a growing child, you have something called rickets, where their bones are malformed, and we still have rickets. Even with our education. We still have some rickets in unrighted states today, which we really shouldn't have. But it's also really important for the immune system. People who have low vitamin D have more allergies, they have more asthma, they have problems with blood sugar. But during pregnancy, it actually can increase a lot of different complications. So it's really something to think about when we talk about pregnancy.

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So what are some of those risks that can be increased during pregnancy

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everything from two times risk of miscarriage, increased risk of preterm birth, increased risk of C section. So think about all these different complications. preeclampsia, which is a serious complication, Pregnancy where woman has high blood pressure is two times a risk, and then even then there's risk in the children. A mom has low vitamin D during pregnancy, her children actually have an increased risk of asthma, language difficulties two times, and even autism four times. That's a really significant risk if you think about it, in terms of complications.

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Now, those are just huge risk, I mean, doubling the risk of a miscarriage, doubling the risk of loss of your pregnancy is just huge. And then as you say, also just the risk of language problems, the risk of autism for your child, no one needs those risks. So what can be done about that?

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Well, the thing about vitamin D is a really easy blood test. And I really like when before women are pregnant, to really identify nutritional deficiencies, because if you can correct that before, you really even set up the pregnancy for less complications and the baby. But also we really need to think about supplementing during pregnancy and really getting the adequate levels and adequate intake of vitamin D

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supplementing. During part two, we'll reduce a lot of those trips and and really help improve the health of the mother and the health of the child. Is that right?

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Oh, absolutely. And again, it's an easy vitamin to supplement. It's an easy blood test to test. It's



covered by insurance. So it's really something that we can do make a big difference in terms of the health of these kids.

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So why is low vitamin D becoming such a problem in the US now?

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Well, vitamin D is a sunshine vitamin. So you really need to get it you absorb it through your skin, it's very unique in that way, it's the only vitamin that we can make. And the only vitamin we can actually get from our environment. But people today are so concerned about the sun and the damage of the sun can that we wear sunscreen and sunscreen itself actually blocks of vitamin D. And then people spend a lot more times indoors. I see this in kids you know the kids who are on the videos for hours and hours a day. We're just not getting exposed. And even windows block it the car windows block it is much less exposure. And then certain people are higher risk for vitamin D deficiency. So the more North you live, there's less sun. Obviously, they're seasonal in the winter, you don't get as much sun. And certain people, if you have darker skin, you actually need that much more because you don't absorb as much vitamin D from the sun when you're outside. So as I said, Our whole environment and our lifestyle has changed.

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So it's so important to know that, you know, the reduction of exposure to the sun by people around us is really putting them in risk, but also isn't there. Can we get some vitamin D also from our food?

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Yeah, we can get some from our food.

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I mean, sometimes in dairy, sometimes fortified dairy, but a lot of people don't take that intake. So even from food, I think the majority is actually from the sun. So you really have to supplement in order to get it orally without the sun.

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Yeah, I remember reading that according to enhance study. The women are only getting about a quarter of the vitamin D that they need from their diet. And that's why as you say it's so important they get it from the sunlight. So how much vitamin D should be taking as a supplement them?



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Well routinely, the recommended daily allowance is actually 600. But it seems like from research that people probably need a lot more, and I routinely test in my practice for vitamin D and I find a lot of low levels and I do supplement. And in pregnancy Even though 600 is recommended, they said 2000 to 4000, which is a really significantly bigger dose is actually safe and actually needed for for women to get adequate vitamin D levels to prevent complications for herself and her baby.

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So is vitamin D does level safe for women to take,

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um, research shows that it's safe and you can follow levels two because there is an individual metabolism, but the minimum level is 30 nanograms per ml. And really 40 is probably a better level. So if you're giving a woman those levels, I mean, if that intake and you still follow in her levels or levels are safe, then it's very safe. As I said, research has shown that that we probably really are under dosing in our prenats. And just in general with for vitamin D.

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Now, I totally agree with that we've seen in some of our research studies with children, we gave them 600 I use a vitamin D, and didn't have any effect in their vitamin D levels. They really need much more to boost it up for children and imagine for adult women even more. So what do you think then is the bottom line What should we do? What should young women be doing? If they're thinking about getting pregnant or if they are pregnant?

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Well, checking your levels, you know, as I said, I think all women of childbearing years, we talked about iron should be checked for But also should be checked for vitamin D. I believe that not being frightened to the sun and having some exposure even helps your mood. And then probably taking like 2000, even before pregnancy as kind of a safe level and kind of even going into pregnancy if they can to really kind of ensure to prevent some of these complications.

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So starting out of the 2000, and then testing and seeing if they need even more than that. It's probably the safest way to go.

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Right. And I said, it's always safe if you're testing and knowing where they are kind of before pregnancy optimally, and then during pregnancy also.



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Right. Well, thank you so much, Debby. Really, insight and knowledge. Thank you.

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You're welcome. Thank you.

