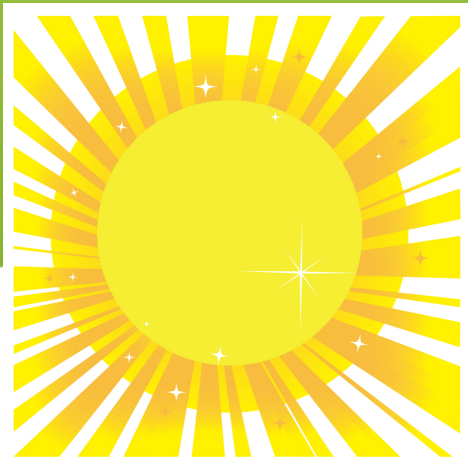


This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Rural Physicians Associate Program (RPAP) at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up-to-date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.

More to Come

The role of vitamin D in pregnancy continues to be researched as we learn more and more about its important role in our health. Recommendations are always changing. It is important to talk to your doctor before starting any new medications or supplements when you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.



For More Information:

Mayo Clinic

http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/vitamin-d/NS_patient-vitamind

MedlinePlus

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/natural/929.html>

WebMD

<http://www.webmd.com/baby/news/20100504/high-doses-of-vitamin-d-may-cut-pregnancy-risk>

Vitamin D in Pregnancy

Designed by

Kathryn McKenzie, MS3

University of Minnesota

RPAP

Patient Education Tool

What Is Vitamin D?

Vitamin D is an important nutrient for our bodies. For example, it is needed to absorb calcium from our food so we can build strong bones and teeth. New research has shown that it is important in pregnancy to help prevent preterm birth, gestational diabetes, and preeclampsia. We continue to learn about new ways vitamin D helps us stay healthy.



How Do I Get Vitamin D?

Our skin makes most of our vitamin D when it is exposed to direct sunlight. Much less of our vitamin D comes from the food we eat, such as tuna, most milks, some juices, eggs, and cheese. Vitamin D supplements are available over the counter and by prescription.

Is My Vitamin D Low?

Most people will have no signs or symptoms of low vitamin D. Darker skin colors, living above the equator, and low sun exposure can increase the risk of low vitamin D.

Your doctor can order a simple blood test to tell if you are low in vitamin D.

Vitamin D in Pregnancy

A low level of vitamin D during pregnancy has been linked to negative effects on the mother and newborn. Currently, most experts recommend 600 international units (IU) of vitamin D a day during pregnancy. For some, the vitamin D in a prenatal vitamin may be enough. If a pregnant woman is low in vitamin D, it is suggested that 1,000-2,000 IU each day of vitamin D be supplemented. Pregnant women should not take in over 4,000 IU a day.

Newborn vitamin D levels depend on their mother's vitamin D level. If the mother is low in vitamin D, their newborn will be too.

Low levels of vitamin D during pregnancy have been associated with bone problems, including fractures, in the newborn.

Preterm birth, gestational diabetes and preeclampsia have been linked to low levels of vitamin D. This is an active area of research, and the relationship between vitamin D and these pregnancy outcomes continues to be explored.

If you are currently pregnant, or planning on becoming pregnant, and are at risk for low vitamin D levels, you may want to talk to your doctor about testing and supplementing your diet.

Title: Vitamin D in Pregnancy

Author: Kathryn McKenzie

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Key words: Vitamin D deficiency, Supplementation in Pregnancy, hypovitaminosis D

Abstract: There is compelling evidence that low levels of vitamin D are a risk factor for adverse pregnancy outcomes such as preeclampsia. This is an area of ongoing research, however, healthcare providers should consider testing and supplementing patients at high risk for hypovitaminosis D.

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