



# VITAMIN D-THE SUNSHINE VITAMIN FOR PREGNANCY AND BREASTFEEDING

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## **Benefits for mom during pregnancy:**

- \*Mothers who are Vit D deficient are 4x more likely to have a cesarean section.
- \*Mothers who are Vit D deficient are at a 5-fold higher risk for pre-eclampsia.
- \*Mothers who are Vit D deficient are 3x as likely to experience gestational diabetes during pregnancy.
- \*Mothers who are Vit D deficient are twice as likely to get a bacterial vaginal infection during pregnancy.
- \*Raising the amount of Vitamin D intake during pregnancy seems to result in more normal birth weight offspring rather than underweight.
- \*Complications of pregnancy, such as preterm labor, preterm birth and infection were the lowest in women taking 4000 IU/day. Women taking only 400 IU (as found in most prenatal vitamins) had double the pregnancy complications as the women taking 4000 IU/day.

## **Benefits for the baby:**

- \*May reduce the incidence of asthma
- \*Higher bone mineral content as they age in the offspring of mothers who supplemented during pregnancy.
- \*Mental retardation is twice as common in offspring of mothers who are Vit D deficient.
- \*There are some theories that schizophrenia and autism have some strong “footprints” of a Vitamin D deficiency, because of the influence of Vit D on brain development.
- \*Mothers who are deficient in Vit D have newborns that are more vulnerable to lower respiratory tract infections.
- \*Children born to women who supplemented with Vitamin D were three times less likely to develop juvenile diabetes before the age of 15.
- \*Newborns with seizures frequently have low blood calcium. Vitamin D can help in the absorption of calcium.
- \*Children with astrocytomas and ependymomas (brain tumors you do not want your child to have) were more likely to be born in the winter, when sun exposure was the least likely in the mother.
- \*Epileptic patients are much more likely to have been born in the winter.
- \*Sufficient vitamin D in early life may decrease the risk of health problems later in life such as schizophrenia, brain tumors, asthma, multiple sclerosis, and autoimmune diseases such as type 1 diabetes.
- \*A defect in dental enamel formation was observed in a higher proportion of children at 3 years of age in mothers who were deficient in Vitamin D.

You can request a blood test (25-hydroxy-vitamin D or 25(OH)D) to determine if you are deficient in Vitamin D. The Vitamin D Council recommends 25(OH)D levels be between 50 and 80 ng/mL, year around.

## **Dosage:**

During pregnancy and lactation, it appears the optimum amount of Vitamin D3 should be 4000 IU/day. At this level, many complications of pregnancy may be avoided, benefits are derived for the growing fetus and sufficient amounts will be supplied for both mother and baby during lactation, without additional supplementation of the infant.

## **References:**

Curr Opin Allergy Clin Immunol. 2009 Jun;9(3):202-7

[http://www.womenshealthcaretopics.com/vitamin\\_d\\_during\\_pregnancy.htm](http://www.womenshealthcaretopics.com/vitamin_d_during_pregnancy.htm)

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