

# Breastfeeding study finds need for iodine

November 19 2012

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(Medical Xpress)—A study involving researchers from Murdoch University, Curtin and Flinders universities has examined the use of nutritional supplements by pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and found potential deficiencies for babies – most notably in iodine.

Dr Mi Kyung Lee, a senior lecturer in Nutrition in Murdoch's School of Chiropractic and [Sports Science](#), said the group undertook a literature search as well as a cohort study of 587 new mothers that included an initial interview and follow-up interviews at 4, 10, 16, 22, 40 and 52 weeks postpartum.

"During pregnancy, about 80 per cent of new mothers in Perth took a [folic acid supplement](#) and 21 per cent took an iron supplement, which

are recommended by agencies such as the [World Health Organisation](#)," Dr Lee said.

"After birth, supplement use dropped and fluctuated between 30 and 40 per cent, with 35 per cent still taking supplements a year after birth.

"In Australia, daily intake of [iodine](#) is recommended both during pregnancy and breastfeeding to ensure sufficient [iodine content](#) in the milk for optimal child development, particularly of the nervous system.

"However, in our study no mothers reported taking iodine supplements."

Dr Lee said while small amounts of iodine are commonly included in multivitamin/[mineral supplements](#), they often did not add up to the recommended amount.

She said some iodine was present in the Australian food supply, but it was generally insufficient, so pregnant and breastfeeding women needed to ensure their supplements contained a sufficient amount.

Recently the National Health and Medical Research Council in Australia recommended daily iodine supplements of 150ug/d as safe and effective for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Dr Lee said that while limited study had been done to date in the area of supplement use during breastfeeding, [new mothers](#) needed to be aware of increased requirements across a range of nutrients.

"During breastfeeding there is a need for around one-third more protein, long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids and B-group vitamins. Vitamins A, C and E as well as iron and zinc requirements also increase," Dr Lee said.

'[Nutritional Supplements](#) During Breastfeeding' by Mi Kyung Lee, Colin Binns, Yun Zhao, Jane Scott and Wendy Oddy appears in *Current Pediatric Reviews*, 2012.

**More information:** [www.ingentaconnect.com/content ...  
rt00004?crawler=true](http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/rt00004?crawler=true)

Provided by Murdoch University

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