

Higher doses of vitamin D may boost preemies' bone health

October 19 2017



(HealthDay)—Higher doses of vitamin D can improve the bone health of

premature babies, new research suggests.

"We are hopeful that neonatologists will consider giving preterm infants 800 IUs [International Units]," said study author Dr. Ann Anderson Berry. She is medical director of the NICU Nebraska Medicine, the clinical partner of the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

"We know that even with standard vitamin D dosing, we were still seeing a fair number of preterm infants who suffered from impaired [bone health](#). This is another form of NICU [[neonatal intensive care](#)] therapy that can help decrease that risk," she said in a Nebraska news release.

Premature and [preterm infants](#) are already routinely given vitamin D to help prevent weak bones and other conditions related to vitamin D deficiency, such as rickets. Dosages vary, however, and many infants still develop bone-related health issues.

To see if there is an optimal dose for protecting bone health, scientists at the University of Nebraska Medical Center looked at changes in vitamin D in the blood of 32 [premature babies](#) over the course of four weeks. The babies, who were born at between 24 and 32 weeks of pregnancy, were given either 400 or 800 IU/day of vitamin D.

After four weeks, the babies' bone density improved and they had greater levels of vitamin D in their blood. Their growth also improved, the study found.

The study authors said they also found that doubling the typical dose of Vitamin D from 400 to 800 IUs could reduce the number of premature infants with extremely [low bone density](#).

The findings were published recently in the journal *PLOS ONE*.

More information: The U.S. National Institute of Medicine provides more information on [vitamin D](#).

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Citation: Higher doses of vitamin D may boost preemies' bone health (2017, October 19)
retrieved 7 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-10-higher-doses-vitamin-d-boost.html>

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