

Syudy: Vitamin D may reduce risk of pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes, and more

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When a woman becomes pregnant, among the many items to typically buy is vitamins. Studies have shown that vitamin supplements during pregnancy are key to the fetus' development.

At the Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work, Cristina Palacios, professor in the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition, has been studying the effects of vitamin D supplementation during pregnancy for more than a decade. Her most [recent findings](#) showed that supplementing [pregnant women](#) with vitamin D alone probably reduces the risk of pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes, low birthweight and may reduce the risk of severe postpartum hemorrhage.

"This is quite impressive, as usually we do not see such an effect from only one vitamin," Palacios. said

When combined with calcium, it may increase the risk of preterm birth. However, the results are driven mainly by only one trial; therefore, results should be interpreted with caution and more studies are needed to elucidate this.

Palacios has conducted several systematic reviews on vitamin D supplementation in pregnancy through her work with the World Health Organization (WHO) and those reviews have been used to set the WHO Guidelines on Vitamin D Supplementation in Pregnancy.

"Currently, only a few countries (including the U.S.) recommend vitamin D supplementation as part of the prenatal care," Palacios said. "Based on the lack of evidence reported in the previous systematic reviews (2012 and 2016), the WHO did not recommend provision of vitamin D supplements during pregnancy as part of routine antenatal care (WHO 2016). However, the WHO is now updating this guideline based on newer evidence from the 2019 systematic review."

Worldwide, vitamin D deficiency is a common problem, particularly during pregnancy. Vitamin D helps the fetus in developing bone structure as well as assisting in the development of the brain, muscles and immune response system.

More information: Cristina Palacios et al. Vitamin D supplementation for women during pregnancy, *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* (2019). [DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD008873.pub4](https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD008873.pub4)

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