

Prenatal fish intake tied to lower risk for autism in offspring

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Prenatal fish intake, but not omega-3 (ω -3) supplement use, may be associated with a lower likelihood of both autism diagnosis and related traits, according to a study published online Sept. 2 in the *American*

Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

Kristen Lyall, Sc.D., from the AJ Drexel Autism Institute at Drexel University in Philadelphia, and colleagues examined associations between prenatal fish intake and ω -3 supplement use with both autism diagnosis and broader autism-related traits. The analysis included data from 32 cohorts participating in the Environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes Cohort Consortium.

The researchers found that compared with no fish intake, fish intake during pregnancy was associated with reduced odds of autism diagnosis (odds ratio, 0.84) and a modest reduction in raw total Social Responsiveness Scale (SRS) scores (β , -1.69 ; 95 percent confidence interval, -3.3 to -0.08). Findings were similar across categories of fish consumption from "any" or "less than once per week" to "more than twice per week." However, there were no significant associations seen with [autism diagnosis](#) for ω -3 supplement use versus nonuse, and only a modest association was suggested for SRS score (β , 1.98 ; 95 percent confidence interval, 0.33 to 3.64).

"Given the low fish intake in the United States general population and the rising autism prevalence, these findings suggest the need for better public health messaging regarding guidelines on [fish](#) intake for pregnant individuals," the authors write.

More information: Kristen Lyall et al, Association of maternal fish consumption and ω -3 supplement use during pregnancy with child autism-related outcomes: results from a cohort consortium analysis, *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.ajcnut.2024.06.013](#)

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