



Wellness Update February 2018

by Susan Hanly - Naturopath

Vitamin D for Baby's Development

Pregnancy is the Road to Wellness

Pregnancy is often described as a 'window of opportunity.' As a mother, being in the best of health before and during pregnancy can help influence critical stages of your baby's development and help create a happy and healthy child. One of these key opportunities is ensuring that you have adequate vitamin D levels to pass onto your child. It is important for mums to have good vitamin D levels in pregnancy, as low prenatal vitamin D levels have been linked to many childhood challenges, such as asthma and allergies, as well as autism, behavioural issues and metabolic effects. On the bright side, adequate vitamin D levels have been found to benefit your child in many ways, improving health and development.

The Perfect Storm for Vitamin D Deficiency

One way to access vitamin D is by exposing your skin to sunlight. Despite living in a sunburnt country, vitamin D deficiency is much more common than you may think, and many Australians and New Zealanders are deficient in this important vitamin. By attempting to avoid the sun to reduce the very real risk of skin cancers, and increasingly spending time indoors, this has created the perfect storm for vitamin D deficiency. Many people will require additional vitamin D to support healthy levels, especially in pregnancy.

Vitamin D for Better Brains and Behaviour!

Vitamin D is essential for protecting your child's brain and nervous system and will assist with learning and behaviour. Low levels have been linked to developmental delays and autism. Interestingly, research has shown that babies conceived during winter are more likely to develop autism than those conceived in summer. This is thought to be due to mum having less exposure to sunlight and consequently, lower vitamin D levels in the colder,

darker months. Boost your vitamin D levels to boost your child's potential!

Vitamin D Makes it Easy to Not be Sneezzy

Prenatal vitamin D deficiency can compromise your little one's immune system, contributing to asthma, allergies and poor immunity. Even when your baby is in utero, vitamin D plays an important role in helping the lungs develop. Throughout childhood, vitamin D also helps to regulate the immune system, to help you have healthier, happier kids.



The Heart of the Issue Comes Down to Vitamin D

A low vitamin D status through pregnancy has also been linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes for the child in later life, possibly linked to factors such as obesity and poor blood glucose control. Protect your child's heart and metabolic health by looking after your own D levels in pregnancy.

Talk to your me today about how to assess your vitamin D levels and whether you require additional vitamin D.

Guidelines for Optimal Vitamin D Levels

The following tips can help pregnant mothers maintain optimal vitamin D levels:

Aim for 6 to 7 minutes of sun exposure mid-morning or mid-afternoon during warmer months, and 7 to 40 minutes at noon during winter; ideally arms and shoulders should be visible and free of sunscreen. If you are low in vitamin D (and/or you wish to avoid the sun), I may recommend vitamin D to quickly and safely build up your vitamin D stores.

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KU-RING-GAI NATUROPATHIC CLINIC

ABN 65 003 012 771

Email: suehanly@iinet.net.au

www.suehanly.com.au

Suite 2, 793-795 Pacific Highway Gordon. 2072 (enter from Park Ave) Ph. 9499 4244. Fax 9498 5603
Herbal Medicine, Clinical Nutrition, In Clinic Health Assessment, Cellular Health Analysis, Weight Management