

[IMAGE]

Expectant Moms, Remember to Drink Milk

Milk is an important source of many nutrients, including vitamin D, calcium and protein. Curiously, many women do not drink enough milk during their pregnancy, even though some studies have shown that milk intake may help reduce the risk of pre-eclampsia and pregnancy-induced high blood pressure. Scientists in Canada have found yet another reason for women to drink milk while pregnant ñ it significantly increases the birth weight of their child.

To determine the effect of milk intake on birth weight, 279 pregnant women ages 19 to 45 were interviewed during their pregnancies and asked to provide information on food consumption, including milk consumption. These findings were then compared with weight, length and head circumference measurements of the women's children at birth.

Analysis of the records found that women who consumed 250 milligrams or less of milk per day while pregnant gave birth to infants who weighed, on average, 120 grams (about 4.25 ounces) less than women who consumed higher amounts of milk. Both milk consumption and vitamin D intake appeared to have an effect on a child's weight at birth. Each additional cup of milk per day was associated with a 41-gram increase in birth weight, while each additional microgram of vitamin D was linked to an extra 11 grams in birth weight.

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends three 8-ounce glasses of milk per day for most population groups as part of a healthy diet. Consuming the recommended three servings provides 90 percent of the recommended daily intake for calcium, and 75 percent of the recommended daily intake of vitamin D. Other options include dairy products such as yogurt and cheese, fortified cereals, and supplements containing vitamin D and calcium. For more information on ways to increase calcium and vitamin D intake during pregnancy, talk to your doctor of chiropractic and visit www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/women/pregnancy/index.html.

Reference:

Mannion CA, Gray-Donald K, Koski KG. Association of low intake of milk and vitamin D during pregnancy with decreased birth weight. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, April 25,

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