

[IMAGE]

## Baby on the Way? Get Your Vitamin D Levels Checked

By Editorial Staff

With the COVID-19 pandemic putting immune health front and center, the health benefits of vitamin D are taking center stage, as they should be. Combine that with the growing body of research suggesting maternal health habits can dramatically impact children's short- and long-term health, and it makes sense that maternal vitamin D status could be a critical health variable to assess.

As we discuss in another article in this issue of *To Your Health*, high blood pressure is an important risk factor for heart disease. According to research published in *JAMA Network Open*, babies whose mothers experienced *pre-eclampsia* – a potential complication of pregnancy that can elevate blood pressure, and affect the kidneys and/or liver – are more likely to experience higher blood pressure between childhood and adolescence.

But here's the good news: Adequate cord blood levels of vitamin D (reflecting *in utero* vitamin D status) reduces the risk that the child experiences blood pressure elevations. The higher the vitamin D levels, the lower the risk.

Now here's the kicker: The study authors note, "Vitamin D deficiency has been associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases including preeclampsia." In other words, vitamin D status doesn't just help avoid childhood blood pressure issues; it also reduces the mother's risk of developing the condition that leads to childhood BP issues in the first place!

If you're an expectant mother and think this doesn't apply to you, consider these two statistics: 1) Pre-eclampsia is the leading cause of pregnancy-related death worldwide; and 2) Approximately 42 percent of the U.S. population is vitamin-D deficient. When it comes to delivering a healthy child with normal blood pressure as they get older, that's a recipe for disaster – but it also offers the solution: vitamin D!

Talk to your doctor about the many benefits of vitamin D. If you're expecting a child, share these findings with your pediatrician so they can assess your vitamin D status and supplement if necessary. You and your child deserve it.

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