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VITAL SIGNS

Having a Baby: Vitamin D Deficiency Is Tied to C-Sections

By NICHOLAS BAKALAR

[Vitamin D deficiency](#) may increase the likelihood of having a [Caesarean section](#), a new study has found.

At the turn of the 20th century, according to background information in the report, deformed bones in the pelvis often led to a [C-section](#), a problem that virtually disappeared with the [vitamin D](#) fortification of milk and other foods. But this study, published online Dec. 23 in The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism, suggests that vitamin D deficiency in [pregnancy](#) is still a problem.

The researchers studied 253 births at a Boston hospital from 2005 to 2007. After controlling for other variables, the scientists found that women with low blood levels of vitamin D were almost four times as likely to have an emergency C-section as those with normal levels. Vitamin D deficiency has been associated with [muscle weakness](#) and [high blood pressure](#), which might help explain the finding.

Dr. Michael Holick, a professor of medicine at [Boston University](#) and the senior author of the study, offered straightforward advice for pregnant women. "Take a thousand-unit supplement of vitamin D, available at any pharmacy, on top of any prenatal [vitamins](#) you're taking, so that you're getting 1,400 units a day," he said. "There is no downside to doing this."

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