WHO antenatal care recommendations for a positive pregnancy experience. Nutritional interventions update: vitamin D supplements during pregnancy.

Guideline ID: 2627 Published: 2020

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Health Organization (WHO). WHO antenatal care recommendations for a positive pregnancy experience. Nutritional interventions update: vitamin D supplements during pregnancy. Geneva: (Switzerland): World Health Organization (WHO); 2020. 34 p. [56 references]

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Overview

Guideline Objective

To present evidence and an updated recommendation on antenatal vitamin D supplements

Patient Population

Pregnant women and adolescent girls receiving antenatal care (ANC) in any health-care facility or community-based setting, and their fetuses and newborns

Recommendations

Recommendation Statements

Oral vitamin D supplementation is not recommended for all pregnant women to improve maternal and perinatal outcomes. (**Not recommended**)

Remarks:

- This recommendation updates and does not alter the respective WHO recommendation on vitamin D supplementation during pregnancy found in the 2016 *WHO Recommendations on Antenatal Care for a Positive Pregnancy Experience*.
- Pregnant women should be encouraged to receive adequate nutrition – which is best achieved through consumption of a healthy, balanced diet – and to refer to guidelines on healthy eating.
- Pregnant women should be advised that sunlight is the most important source of vitamin D. The amount of time needed in the sun is not known and depends on many variables, such as the amount of skin exposed, the time of day, latitude and season, skin pigmentation (darker skin pigments synthesize less vitamin D than lighter pigments) and sunscreen use.
- For pregnant women with suspected vitamin D deficiency, vitamin D supplements may be given at the current recommended nutrient intake of 200 IU (5 µg) per day. This may include women in populations where direct sun exposure is limited.

Evidence Rating Scheme

Quality of Evidence in Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE)

Quality Level	Definition
High	We are very confident that the true effect lies close to that of the estimate of the effect.

Quality Level	Definition
Moderate	We are moderately confident in the effect estimate: the true effect is likely to be close to the estimate of the effect, but there is a possibility that it is substantially different.
Low	Our confidence in the effect estimate is limited: the true effect may be substantially different from the estimate of the true effect.
Very low	We have very little confidence in the effect estimate: the true effect is likely to be substantially different from the estimate of the effect.

Recommendation Rating Scheme

Three types of recommendation were made, namely:

- Recommended
- Context-specific recommendation:
    - Only in the context of rigorous research
    - Only with targeted monitoring and evaluation
    - Only in other specific contexts
- Not recommended

In the absence of evidence of benefits, evidence of potential harm led to a recommendation against the option. Where evidence of potential harm was found for interventions that were also found to have evidence of important benefits, depending on the level of certainty and likely impact of the harm, such evidence of potential harm was more likely to lead to a context-specific recommendation for the intervention (where the context is explicitly stated within the recommendation).

Source: WHO Recommendations on Antenatal Care for a Positive Pregnancy Experience. Geneva (Switzerland): World Health Organization; 2016. p. 10.

Related Content

Supporting Documents

- Vitamin D Supplementation for Women during Pregnancy (Review); 2019.
    - Search Methods.
- WHO Handbook for Guideline Development, 2nd Edition; 2014.

Implementation Tools

No implementation tools available.

Patient Education

No patient education materials available.

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TRUST Scorecard

Composition of Guideline Development Group (GDG)

Multidisciplinary GDG Members	**Yes**
Methodologist Involvement	**Yes**
Incorporation of Patient and Public Perspective	★★★★★

Systematic Review of Evidence

Literature Search	★★★★★
Study Selection	★★★★★
Evidence Synthesis	★★★★★

Foundations for Recommendations

Strength of Evidence Grade	★★★★★
Description of Benefits and Harms of Recommendations	★★★★★
Summary of Evidence Supporting Recommendations	★★★★★
Strength of Recommendations Rating	★★☆☆☆
Clear Articulation of Recommendations	★★★★★

Funding Source — **Yes**

Disclosure and Management of Financial Conflicts of Interests — ★★★★★

External Review — ★★★★★

Updating — ★★★★★

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