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Vitamin D and Breast Milk

Recent research on vitamin D reinforces the need for supplementation for infants and breastfeeding mothers. I discovered it because I'm updating the research on *Healthy Babies* before I record the new CD. But there's another reason; for those of you on Facebook, you've seen a picture of me with my pretend grandson Riley who will be one this month (when one of your pretend daughters has a baby, it's your pretend grandchild). I want to make sure he stays healthy as he continues to grow. Vitamin D is important especially because he lives in Grand Rapids where sunshine is at a premium several months of the year. Let's look at the research.



Breastfeeding is important for many reasons but especially for natural nutrition for the baby. The key is that mother's milk is reflective of the mother's diet. When it comes to vitamin D, especially in the northern states, vitamin D in breast milk is also dependent on exposure to sunlight. Researchers in Denmark examined breast milk and blood levels of over 100 mothers and infants for vitamin D levels. The longer the mother breastfed the infant, the lower the vitamin D content of their milk and the lower the vitamin D levels in the baby. It's not surprising as exposure to sunshine would be limited both for mother and baby.

Before anyone even goes there, breastfeeding is a very good thing. But we live in the 21st century where we limit exposure to sunshine for moms and babies and sunblock is used to protect our skin. We'll look at research that examines solutions the rest of this week.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

Reference: Am J Clin Nutr. 2016 Jan;103(1):107-14

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