

Could vitamin B3 supplements prevent birth defects?

An extra dose of vitamin B3 might help prevent certain kinds of complex birth defects, according to a new study. The vitamin can help compensate for defects in the body's ability to make a molecule, called nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD), which researchers have linked for the first time to healthy fetal development in humans. The find raises the possibility that boosting levels of B3 in pregnant women's diets might help lower overall rates of birth defects.

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Scientists fed pregnant mutant mice a diet without [vitamin B3]. Many pups died in utero, and those that survived had [birth defects]. Giving the mutant pregnant mice low doses of niacin led to pups with less severe defects, and a niacin-rich diet allowed the mutant mice to give birth to healthy litters. The work suggests that B3 supplements might help families with mutations in NAD-related genes, by preventing birth defects or perhaps even by treating already affected children.

Of course, more human studies are needed before doctors could recommend B3 supplements for pregnant women, says Matthew Vander Heiden, who studies the role of NAD in cancer biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Vitamin B3 could help prevent birth defects](#)