

# *Cod Liver Oil / Vitamin A During Pregnancy: Truly a Danger?*

Studies **do not** support that Cod Liver Oil and Vitamin A are dangerous to mother and baby. Neither does the experience of peoples who have always eaten high levels of vitamin A (such as traditional Eskimos who consumed far more than we do even with supplementation, and had strong healthy babies with excellent teeth and eyesight).

Here's a study that showed specifically that levels from 8,000-10,000 IU were not harmful:

[NIH - Moderate Doses of Vitamin A Do Not Pose Risk of Birth Defects](#)

Another study shows that Cod Liver Oil in pregnancy actually increases birth weight (and benefits associated with higher birth weight) in infants.

[Relationship between dietary intake of cod liver oil in early pregnancy and birthweight](#)

Again, in addition to the studies above, case studies of native cultures eating lots of fish, whale and seal blubber, as well as organ meats (all high in Vitamin A) show healthy, robust babies. These cultures also had high fertility rates.

Some warn against Vitamin A because of Vitamin A/Vitamin D imbalance. Animal foods and especially cod liver oil, however, contain Vitamin D as well as A, and in the correct proportion for the human body.

### *Summary and reference information for additional studies on cod liver oil benefits during pregnancy:*

Pregnant women using cod liver oil have infants with a lower risk for juvenile type 1 diabetes.<sup>21</sup> This effect was found only in mothers taking cod liver oil, not in mothers taking multivitamin supplements. Cod liver oil taken by nursing mothers improves the fatty acid profile in breast milk to promote optimal brain development and also increases levels of vitamin A to prevent infections. Interestingly, cod liver oil does not provide increased vitamin D in breast milk.<sup>23,24</sup>

21. Stene LC, Ulriksen J, Magnus P, Joner G. Use of cod liver oil during pregnancy associated with lower risk of Type I diabetes in the offspring. *Diabetologia* 2000;43:1093-8.

23. Tsutsumi K, Obata Y, Takayama K, Loftsson T, Nagai T. Effect of cod liver oil extract on the buccal permeation of ergotamine tartrate. *Drug Dev.Ind.Pharm.* 1998;24:757-62.

24. Olafsdottir AS, Wagner KH, Thorsdottir I, Elmadfa I. Fat-Soluble Vitamins in the Maternal Diet, Influence of Cod liver oil Supplementation and Impact of the Maternal Diet on Human Milk Composition. *Ann.Nutr Metab* 2001;45:265-72.

### *More on Vitamin A:*

Vitamin A is essential for a healthy baby - animal studies have conclusively shown the **deficiency** of Vitamin A will cause birth defects - eye defects being one of the most notable. Narrow facial features are another sign of deficiency.

[Read more about Vitamin A](#)

High Vitamin A is present in almost all traditional cultures and they had healthy, vibrant babies and easy pregnancies. If you want to read more about systematic and worldwide studies on this, read the book *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration*. The pictures in it are worth 1,000 words!

## **Recommended Cod Liver Oil**

I recommend [Green Pasture Fermented Cod Liver Oil](#) – this brand of cod liver oil is processed traditionally so all the nutrients in the oil are intact. Many other brands actually remove the natural Vitamin A and Vitamin D and replace it with synthetic varieties!! Some other brands (like Carlson’s) may go down more easily, but if possible, take Green Pasture’s fermented oil! You can take the Green Pastures pill if swallowing is really tough. I budget is an issue, I recommend [Swanson’s double-strength pills](#).

For taking the straight fermented oil, I find it helpful to follow immediately with a “chaser” drink, either Kombucha tea or a pregnancy tea blend. A few sips help wash away the cod liver oil taste. If I’m having a really hard time motivating myself to take it, I’ll have my tea then a couple of chocolate chips as a reward ;) Eating something like veggie chips or popcorn may help too, as these help “soak” up the oil in your stomach. I’ve found eating spicy foods right after cod liver oil makes my tummy upset!

Take as often as you can if you have morning sickness, and try to take every day after morning sickness is gone.