Vitamin D May Prevent Tooth Decay

The review includes data from 3,000 children enrolled in 24 clinical trials published from the 1920s to the 1980s. Overall, the trials showed that vitamin D supplementation led to a 50 percent drop in the linldence of tooth decay. perhaps because vitamin D helps the body absorb the tooth-building calcium it needs.

In the trials, the vitamin was delivered either via supplemental UV radiation or by diet products, such as cod liver oil, which contain it.

Philippe Hujoel, PhD, DDS, of the University of Washington, conducted the trial, saying his main goal was to summarize the existing research, so dental professionals could "take a fresh look at this vitamin D question."

But Hujoel's results come as no surprise to researchers who have also studied vitamin D and dental health. "The findings from the University of Washington reaffirm the importance of of vitamin D for dental health ," Michael Holick, PhD, MD, professor of medicine at the Boston University Medical Center told Science Daily. He went on to say that children who are vitamin D deficient experience late teething and a risk of tooth decay.

Dental caries, or decay, among children are increasing while vitamin D levels among many populations have dropped, Hujoel said in the study. "Whether this is more than just a coincidence is open to debate," he said. "In the meantime,pregnant women or young mothers can do little harm by realizing that vitamin D is essential to their offspring's health," also noting that systematic reviews do have some flaws based on possible biases in some of the clinical trials that damaged the results.

In recent years, vitamin D has gained a reputation as sort of a vitamin cure-all. Most recently, women with the highest levels of vitamin D were shown to have the lowest risk of developing Alzheimer's disease by researchers at the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis. A second separate study found that low vitamin D levels results in a greater Alzheimer's risk, even when isolating for other lifestyle and health

factors such as body-mass index, diet, and cognitive performance. Other strong links have been identified between low levels of vitamin D and cancer and low levels of vitamin D and heart disease.