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A double-blind study recently published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition showed a significant positive correlation between supplemental zinc during pregnancy and infant growth throughout the first year of life.

PRENATAL ZINC SUPPLEMENTATION INFLUENCES LEAN TISSUE GROWTH IN INFANTS

It has been suggested that maternal zinc intake influences growth *in utero* and in the first stages of growth after birth. In a recent study, researchers assessed the effect of maternal zinc supplementation during pregnancy as well as its effects on infant growth during the first twelve months.

A randomized, double-blind, controlled trial of prenatal zinc supplementation was conducted among women in Lima, Peru between 1995 and 1997. Women enrolled during the second trimester and were assigned to receive daily supplements with zinc (15 mg zinc + 60 mg iron + 250 mcg folic acid) or without zinc (just 60 mg iron + 250 mcg folic acid) through pregnancy to one month after delivery. At birth, 546 infants were followed for 12 months to assess growth. Measurements were collected monthly while health status and dietary intake were monitored weekly.

Infants born to mothers supplemented with zinc had significantly larger average growth measures beginning at 4 months and continuing through month 12. Prenatal zinc was associated with greater weight, calf circumference, chest circumference, and calf muscle area.

In this population of women, zinc supplementation during pregnancy resulted in children with better growth measures (which were in turn associated with healthy increases in lean tissue mass).

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