

Probiotics Lowers Risk of Preeclampsia

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Preeclampsia, also known as toxemia, is a medical condition where hypertension arises at various times during pregnancy (pregnancy-induced hypertension) and is associated with high protein levels in the urine. The only cure for preeclampsia is early delivery. It is the most common and dangerous complication of pregnancy affecting the mother and possibly the fetus. Preeclampsia is a contributing factor accounting for 76,000 deaths a year worldwide. This condition only occurs during pregnancy and within a few days or weeks after delivery the mother's blood pressure should return to normal.

Lactobacillus is a type of bacteria that lives in the digestive, urinary and genital systems. It is also in some fermented foods such as yogurt and in dietary supplements. Lactobacillus is used for treating and preventing diarrhea, irritable bowel syndrome, Crohn's disease, inflammation of the colon, urinary tract infections, vaginal yeast infections, respiratory infections, skin disorders.

A report, in the American Journal of Epidemiology, showed that daily probiotic consumers showed a 20 percent lower risk of developing preeclampsia. The study was performed in the Norwegian Mother and Child Cohort Study by using a prospective design in 33,399 primiparous women (women who have given birth to only one child) in the years 2002-2008. The intake of milk-based products containing probiotic lactobacilli was estimated from a self-reported food frequency questionnaire. Preeclampsia diagnoses were obtained from the Norwegian Medical Birth Registry. Findings from this study indicate that regular consumption of milk-based probiotics could be associated with lower risk of preeclampsia in primiparous women.¹

1 Brantsaeter AL, Myhre R, Haugen M, et al. Intake of probiotic food and risk of preeclampsia in primiparous women: The Norwegian Mother and Child Cohort Study. *Am J Epidemiol.* Oct2011;174(7):807-15.