

AFRICAN PEOPLE'S
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INC.

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Our Mission

* Develop and institutionalize programs addressing the grave disparities in education, health, healthcare, and economic development faced by the African community.

* Defend the human and civil rights of African people.

Healthy Connections

OCTOBER 2009

Children's Health Briefs

African and Latino U.S. Children Lacking Vitamin D

Almost 90 percent of African children and 80 percent of Latino children age one to eleven don't get enough vitamin D and could be at risk for a variety of health problems, the most recent national analysis suggests. Overall, at least one in five U.S. children (20 percent) could be vitamin D-deficient.

These are "astounding numbers," that should serve as a call to action said Dr. Jonathan Mansbach, lead author of the new analysis and researcher at Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital.

The findings add to mounting evidence about vitamin D deficiency in children, teens and adults, a concern because of recent studies suggesting the vitamin might help prevent serious diseases, including infections, diabetes and even some cancers. Previous studies found low levels of vitamin D were prevalent in U.S. teens, and also showed kids with low levels had higher blood pressure and were more likely to be overweight.

Vitamin D deficiency can cause Rickets, a bone disease common a century ago but continues to occur. Rickets can be treated and prevented with 400 units daily of vitamin D — which is recommended for all children. Most need vitamin supplements.

Exactly how much vitamin D children and adults should get, and defining when they are deficient, is under debate. But using the American Academy of Pediatrics cutoff for healthy vitamin D levels, about 20 percent of the nearly 3,000 children from 2001-06 have blood levels that are too low. Applying a less strict, higher cutoff, 66 percent of children that age, including 90 percent of African children, are deficient.

Study: 90% of black children will get food stamps

Nearly half of all U.S. children and 90 percent of African youngsters will be on food stamps at some point during childhood, and fallout from the current recession could push those numbers even higher, researchers say. Data from about 18,000 adults and children from 1968 through 1997 were studied.

It's a medical issues pediatricians need to be aware of because children on food stamps are at risk for malnutrition and other ills linked with poverty. "The current recession is likely to generate for children in the U.S. the greatest level of material deprivation that we will see in our professional lifetimes," Stanford pediatrician Paul Wise wrote. Other recent research suggests that more than 40 percent of U.S. children will live in poverty or near-poverty by age 17.

From: Associated Press

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