



Autism Research Study Findings



THE STUDY: Cholesterol production helps guide brain development of the child during pregnancy, and disruptions to this process may have long-term effects. Led by a team of researchers from the University of Nebraska Medical Center, the study found that, if prescribed during pregnancy, certain medications known to inhibit development of cholesterol could be linked to a higher chance of a child developing **autism spectrum disorder**.



THE PROCESS: Researchers analyzed **6.14 million health records** of mothers and their children. They focused on 14 medications that affect how the body makes cholesterol. The medications included ones that treat depression, severe mental health conditions, anxiety, heart conditions, and high cholesterol.



THE FINDINGS: When these medications were prescribed to women during pregnancy, their children had a **higher chance of developing autism spectrum disorder**. The risk may be even greater if more than one of these medications is prescribed at the same time.



NEXT STEPS: **Talk with your provider** about benefits to your health, any risks to your baby, or whether there are safer medication options to successfully treat your condition. More research is needed to better understand these findings and identify safer alternatives.



LEARN MORE: View the study, published in *Molecular Psychiatry*, and more at unmc.edu/news/autism-study