



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP

Minister for Health
Minister for Sport

MEDIA RELEASE

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Historic medical breakthrough by Australian researchers

Today's ground-breaking announcement of a simple cure that will save the lives of many infants confirms the well-deserved reputation of Australia's health and medical researchers as among the very best in the world.

After more than 12 years of study, researchers at the Victor Chang Research Institute have today announced the dietary supplement vitamin B3, also known as niacin, can cure a deficiency in a molecule which can lead to miscarriage and many types of birth defects.

I want to congratulate Professor Sally Dunwoodie, who led this important project, and all involved at the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute for their excellent work.

I'm pleased to say that this ground-breaking research received financial support from the Australian Government through the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Today's announcement provides new hope to the one in four pregnant women who suffer a miscarriage.

And with 7.9 million babies around the world currently being born with birth defects every year, this breakthrough is incredible news.

It's a simple solution and yet a truly profound result. It has rightly been likened to the discovery last century that folic acid supplements could prevent spina bifida and other neural tube defects in babies.

This research will literally deliver happy, healthy babies to many, many families around the world.

Australia's research community is at the forefront of modern healthcare and new innovative treatments. They are developing the answers to disease and suffering which will improve the lives of Australians and others around the world.

Medical research is one of the four pillars of the Turnbull Government's Long Term National Health Plan. And our commitment to the Medical Research Future Fund will see our direct funding for health and medical research effectively double by 2021.

Once again, on behalf of the Turnbull Government, I congratulate Professor Sally Dunwoodie and her colleagues on this incredible discovery.

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