

Vitamins for Healthy Pregnancy



Proper nutrition during pregnancy is not only vital to the mother's health but is also essential to the healthy development of her offspring from born to adulthood. Maternal nutrition is one of the major determinants of pregnancy outcome where reduced intakes or lack of specific nutrients during pregnancy would influence the length of gestation, proper placental and fetal growth during pregnancy (Dhobale, 2017).

Standard multivitamins might be inadequate to provide the necessary amount for both mother and baby as pregnant lady requires higher nutritional needs. Besides natural and fortified foods, there are plenty types of prenatal vitamins and supplements available in the market from gummy chews to powder forms.

Folic acid: An Essential Prenatal Vitamin

Folic acid is one of the most important prenatal vitamin as it is required to produce and repair DNA. It is an essential vitamin for a healthy nervous system and proper brain functioning. The need for folic acid will be increased during pregnancy as it is required for growth and development of the fetus. It has been conclusively established that dietary supplementation with folic acid before and during conceiving significantly helps to reduce the risk of autism in the baby (Gao et al., 2016).

Low maternal folate status is a risk factor in the development of neural tube defects in the developing fetus' which was authorized in the European Union in 2014 for a 400 µg/day folic acid supplementation. Hence, it is advisable that the supplement should be consumed for at least 1 month before and up to 3 months after conception for women of childbearing age (Sadler, 2018).

Vitamin C: A Vital Vitamin for pregnant women

Vitamin C involves in the synthesis of collagen and in antioxidant defense mechanisms. Humans are unable to synthesize vitamin C on our own, thus our body requires adequate dietary intake of vitamin C in order to maintain our body's storage. On top of that, vitamin C requirement is increased during pregnancy as it is actively transported across the placenta (Rumbold et al., 2015).

Pregnant women needs to increase their Vitamin C intake as it is actively transported across the placenta. Insufficient intake of Vitamin C during pregnancy could be associated with complications such as high blood pressure with along with swelling of the hands, feet and face (pre-elampsia), anaemia and having a small baby. Sufficient intake of vitamin C starting from early pregnancy has been associated with small increases in birthweight and placental weight (Rumbold et al., 2015).

Vitamin D: A Healthy Pregnancy – The Sunshine Vitamin

Vitamin D supplementation is an effective method to increase a mother's vitamin D status and to promote optimal vitamin D levels in newborns and breastfed infants (Thiele et al., 2017). It is important for bone

health and calcium homeostasis. Thus, the achievement of maternal vitamin D sufficiency during pregnancy and lactation has the potential to improve the health of both women and infants simultaneously (Thiele et al., 2017).

Low mineral vitamin D status during pregnancy is directly associated with accumulated adverse effects including depression, autism, maternal osteomalacia, gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, small birth size, respiratory diseases, impaired fetal growth and bone development later in childhood. In addition, inadequate vitamin D status has been linked to fetal neurodevelopment in recent years (Elsori & Hammoud, 2017; Jan Mohamed et al., 2014).

Conclusion

Poor nutrition during pregnancy is associated with a range of health risks for the pregnant women and her developing fetus. Miscarriage is a common complication in pregnancy which draws our attention today and poor dietary intake of vitamins has been associated with an increased risk of miscarriage. Thus, supplementing women with vitamins either prior to or in early pregnancy may help prevent miscarriage (Balogun et al., 2016).

Hence, it is very advisable to take prenatal vitamins in order to reduce the nutritional gaps in the mother's diet during pregnancy. Sufficient intake of vitamins also help to regulate the body processes more effectively.

You may also be interested in [Have you ever heard of Gestational Diabetes?](#)

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