

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

Which Prenatal Vitamin Is Right For Me?

(NAPSA)—For many women who are pregnant or trying to conceive, a prenatal vitamin in conjunction with a healthy diet can help support a healthy pregnancy. Prenatal vitamins are specially formulated multivitamins that provide certain extra nutrients a woman may need before conception, during pregnancy or during breast-feeding. But all prenatal vitamins are not created equal.

Dr. James McGregor, Visiting Professor of Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California, answers a few questions about prenatal vitamins. His answers will help you work with your doctor to choose a prenatal vitamin that is right for you.

What should my prenatal vitamin contain?

Even though most nutrients needed to support a healthy pregnancy and baby may be obtained from your diet, some important ones may be missing or not adequately supplied. Key nutrients that doctors may advise supplementing include folic acid, DHA (docosahexaenoic acid), calcium, iron and vitamins C, D3 and E.

Why are nutrients such as folic acid and iron important components of my prenatal vitamin?

Folic acid supports a mother's body changes and her baby's growth and development. According to The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), consuming at least 400 mcg (0.4 mg) a day of folic acid as part of a well-balanced diet before conception and during early pregnancy may help reduce your baby's risk of having neural tube defects and serious birth defects of the brain and spinal cord (e.g., spina bifida). Iron supports the formation of healthy red blood cells for oxygen transport.

What are some other ingredients found in prenatal vitamins that may be beneficial to me?

Some prenatal vitamins also contain docusate sodium, a gentle stool softener, to help alleviate occasional irregularity that can be common during pregnancy. Expectant mothers can also benefit from an additional source of vitamin B6, which may help alleviate nausea and vomiting during pregnancy.

Why is DHA important?

DHA is a key omega-3 fatty acid that helps support fetal and infant brain and eye development. Often, women do not consume the



amount of DHA from their diet that many experts recommend, which is about 200 to 300 mg daily during pregnancy and breast-feeding. You may want to look for prenatal supplements that contain plant-based DHA rather than fish-based DHA. Plant-based DHA eliminates potential concerns about ocean-borne contaminants or toxins such as mercury, and avoids fishy smells or aftertaste that can be associated with fish-based DHA.

Do all prenatal vitamins include the same amounts of ingredients?

No. Non-prescription prenatal vitamins tend to have lower amounts of certain nutrients, such as folic acid. Typically, non-prescription prenatal vitamins contain less than 1 mg of folic acid, while prescription prenatal vitamins may contain 1 mg or more—such as PreNexa[®] Rx Prenatal Vitamin with Plant-Based DHA, which contains 1.25 mg of folic acid.

With so many prenatal vitamin choices, how do I know which one is best for me?

Talk to your doctor to determine the right prenatal vitamin for you. Be sure that the prenatal vitamin you choose meets your lifestyle needs. Many prenatal vitamins, like PreNexa[®], are available in a single, convenient capsule that is taken once daily at a convenient time for you.

What should I know about storing prenatal vitamins?

Accidental overdose of iron-containing products, such as prenatal vitamins, is a leading cause of fatal poisoning in children under 6. So be certain to keep prenatal vitamins out of the reach of children; in case of accidental overdose, call a doctor or poison control center immediately.

For more information about prenatal vitamins, including important warnings and precautions, ask your doctor or visit product-specific websites such as www.prenexa.com.

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