

Not just Folic Acid

While medical scientists do not expend many resources in researching the benefits of vitamins, there are instances where the evidence is too compelling to ignore. Over the past few decades, doctors have started to promote the supplementation of certain vitamins as remedies or prevention methods for specific diseases.

A case in point is folic acid. As the American society turned to a fast-paced, food-on-the-go, takeout-meals culture, the intake of fruits and vegetables declined. With that came a rise in neural tube defects. Numerous clinical studies have identified a connection between maternal lack of adequate folic acid and these birth defects. Over the last half-century, doctors have recommended that all women of child-bearing age ingest a daily minimum of 400mcg of folic acid, preferably 800mcg, and more for those at risk. When many women did not act on that recommendation, the FDA approved fortification of certain foods like breakfast cereals and other grain products. That resulted in a 25-30% reduction in the number of births with neural tube defects like anencephaly and spina bifida. This bolstered the clinical findings supporting supplementation of folic acid for all women in their child-bearing years, but especially during pregnancy.

What does that mean for me?

The fact that doctors recommend vitamins during pregnancy drives home the fact that a mother's nutritional intake during this crucial time can have a direct impact on her child's development. A balanced diet along with a prenatal vitamin may not only make the pregnancy easier on the mother, but also support the rapid growth of an unborn child. Medical findings suggest that focusing on optimal maternal health during pregnancy, both by visiting the doctor as necessary and concentrating on proper nutrition, can positively impact the child for his or her entire lifetime. Taking your prenats is more than just a good idea. It is your best investment in your child's future.

What should I look out for in a prenatal vitamin?

Not just folic acid. While that's important, there is more. Recent research highlights the importance of DHA. DHA has numerous benefits and assists in the development of crucial body systems and functions. DHA is critical for healthy fetal development, and is important for mother's postnatal hormonal balance. Maternal DHA levels directly impact the developing central nervous system, **cognition** (mental development), **vision**, and **motor function**. **Cognition** includes mental processes such as awareness, perception, reasoning, and judgment. **Vision** and visual acuity refers to clearness of vision. It is dependent on the sharpness of the retinal focus within the eye and the sensitivity of the interpretative ability in the brain. The development of both the retina and visual cortex are dependent on DHA. And finally, **motor functions** allow the brain to control the muscles in the body in a precise and efficient manner. Prenatal DHA availability, which is influenced by maternal intake during pregnancy, is linked to better performance in these three areas throughout life.

But the importance of folic acid cannot be minimized. Folic acid is the synthetic form of folate, which, as previously discussed, is crucial for fetal neural tube development. However, it is estimated that as many as 50% of all women have a gene mutation, MTHFR, and cannot properly digest and process folic acid. As such, many who are supplementing, are not reaching optimal blood levels. Zahler's Prenatal+DHA 300 contains 1000 mcg of natural folate, sourced from Quatrofolate, the most stable and bioactive form on the market.

Another critical component of Prenatal+DHA 300 is the 400mcg of chromium. Many women develop gestational diabetes. This puts them at risk for complications and also affects the developing child. Chromium can help regulate and stabilize maternal glucose levels thus reducing the risk of developing diabetes during this delicate stage. Chromium can also help stabilize blood sugar levels of the newborn child.

So Why Zahler's?

Each time Advanced Nutrition by Zahler sets out to create a new formula for a supplement, a process is set in motion. Starting with meticulous clinical research, Zahler's studies the various available sources of substances and chooses only the purest and most beneficial ones. Furthermore, we focus on potency and stability of supplements, so that although a bottle of vitamins may not be opened until several months after production, the nutrients are still strong enough to provide health benefits.

Another valuable consideration is the bioavailability of each ingredient. Some sources of vitamins and herbs are not in a form which the body can easily digest. Sometimes the digestive system must perform complex conversions before the

vitamin is available for nutritional purposes. In other cases, the nutrient remains undigested and is eliminated in waste matter. Another possibility is that vitamins are not digested properly and build up in the bloodstream. Of greater concern is the resulting deficiency of critical nutrition. We go to great lengths to ensure that each part of our vitamin provides optimal nutritional supplementation.

Medical research has clearly established that the lifelong health of a child depends largely on the mother's health and nutrition during pregnancy. Zahler's Prenatal+DHA 300 is a balanced, synergistic formulaic composition, in an easy-to-swallow softgel that provides a curated compilation of nutrients required by the expectant mother and developing baby. Ratios are optimal for absorption, metabolism and safety. Providing your child with the best possible start in life is an investment that pays lifelong dividends.