HEALTH WATCH

Real health information to change your life

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Did you know that –

You can make a profound difference to your baby's brain, nerve & eye development while it's still in the womb?

ALL the active brain cells a child will have are present when it's born. A well nourished foetus develops ±250,000 brain cells every minute during pregnancy, so nutritional deficiencies during pregnancy can result in your child being born with less than the maximum number of active brain cells.

A deficiency of the B vitamin folic acid during pregnancy can cause neural tube defects such as spina bifida and anencephaly.

A deficiency of vitamin D during the first trimester of pregnancy has been linked to an increased risk of your child developing multiple sclerosis later on in life.[1]

These are just some instances of how your child's future may be jeopardised by sub optimal nutrition during pregnancy.

Here's what some experts have to say -

Even the slightest deficiencies during pregnancy can have serious effects on the health of the offspring (Patrick Holford, "The Optimum Nutrition Bible").

A developing infant who is fed poorly during its period of brain growth may be left with learning disabilities which will remain for the rest of its life. (American researchers Brian and Roberta Morgan in their book "Brain Food").

Pregnant women have particularly high nutrient needs which they seldom meet through dietary means alone, for a number of reasons, viz.

- during the first trimester of pregnancy many women experience nausea, sometimes accompanied by vomiting, and don't feel like eating.
- during the last trimester, the enlarged abdomen pushes against the stomach, causing heartburn and a feeling of fullness, so less food is consumed than normal.

Also, due to soil depletion, artificial fertilizers, transportation, storage, processing of foods, cold storage, freezing, standing in the sun, cooking, etc., many nutrients are lost, so even if you are eating a well-balanced diet, it is almost impossible to get everything you need from your food. The best time to eat an orange, for example, is as soon as it's been picked! The Vit. C content declines rapidly after picking, so much so that in one study, supermarket bought oranges contained no Vit. C when tested.

It therefore makes good sense to supplement the diet with vitamins and minerals. These are best taken with meals to ensure optimum utilization by the body. Should nausea be accompanied by vomiting, take nutritional supplements after meals, when the feeling of nausea has passed. Try eating smaller meals more often to combat nausea, and also in the last trimester to ease heartburn and ensure that you eat enough, go for quality of food rather than quantity.

During pregnancy the need for vitamins, calcium, iron and zinc all increase. According to nutritionist Patrick Holford, supplementing with these can eliminate "morning sickness" (can occur at any time of the day).

Optimum nutrition decreases the likelihood of pre-eclamptic toxaemia (increase in blood pressure, oedema and excessive protein in the urine), a common complication of pregnancy.

Before and during pregnancy, the diet should be high in fibre and nutrients and low in bad fats (margarine, hydrogenated fats, fatty meats, fried foods). Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables (raw when possible), nuts, seeds and wholegrains and drink plenty of clean water. Avoid caffeine and alcohol. DON"T smoke!

The following nutrients are particularly important during pregnancy:

VITAMINS & MINERALS

As we have already noted, it's basically impossible to get all the nutrients required for optimum foetal development from modern diets, so a good multivitamin/mineral supplement is essential for pregnant moms. The key is to use a product containing only natural vitamins, as synthetics are not as bioavailable. The whole point of supplementing is to give your body what it's not getting from your diet. If the vitamins & minerals are not assimilated into the cells they are of absolutely no use to you! A good multivitamin/mineral supplement should be ***natural***, contain ***ALL*** the vitamins in their correct ratios and contain ***no*** artificial colourants or preservatives.

Some fast facts:

- Premature and low birthweight infants are often deficient in Vit. E[2]
- Choline (a B vitamin) [3], zinc, iron & iodine deficiencies can contribute to birth defects[4]
- A deficiency of calcium during pregnancy has been linked to the risk of hypertension & pre-eclampsia, which can result in miscarriage.
- Magnesium is important for the absorption of calcium and other minerals and is involved in many essential metabolic processes, including energy production of glucose, protein synthesis, muscle impulse transmission and neurotransmission.

PROTEIN

Protein is the basic building block of every single cell in the body, including all enzymes, hormones and antibodies. As the foetus is developing at a staggering rate it is essential for the mother to get an adequate supply of good quality protein in the diet every day. Unfortunately, traditional sources of protein like meat, eggs and cheese are high in cholesterol and calories, as well as often being contaminated with antibiotics and growth hormones.

Protein is also not a single entity, as many imagine, but is made up of building blocks call amino acids. The human body needs 22 different amino acids on a daily basis to renew and repair all the different cells. During pregnancy, it is essential to get in all 22 daily in order to meet the demands of the rapid growth of the baby. A good protein supplement should contain all the amino acids, in their natural form, be low in calories and cholesterol, and easily digested.

OMEGA 3

DHA and EPA are important components of Omega 3

DHA and Brain Development:

From the moment of conception onward, the foetus has a critical need for OMEGA-3 fatty acids, as DHA is essential to nervous system development. Research shows it is incorporated into the structures of the brain and eyes and is the preferred fatty acid for development of these tissues.[5]

In the foetus, DHA is the most abundant fatty acid in the brain, comprising as much as 50% of the total fatty acids associated with eye development and visual activity.[6]

The importance of DHA to the development and function of the brain is perhaps best seen when deficiencies are known to exist. Symptoms of a DHA deficiency during foetal development include distal numbness (the loss of sensation at the extremities of the nervous system, such as the finger tips), visual blurring and muscle weakness.[7]

OMEGA-3 and Asthma: The benefits of having an abundance of EPA and DHA available to the foetus and newborn express themselves in other ways as well.

A study presented to the American Thoracic Society in May, 2004 showed that fish oil dramatically reduces the likelihood of an asthmatic mother passing asthma along to her offspring. Children whose asthmatic mothers ate diets rich in EPA and DHA during pregnancy were 71% less likely to develop asthma themselves. With the prevalence of asthma increasing in the world, this is an important discovery.[11]

A similar study conducted in Australia found that OMEGA-3 fatty acid supplementation reduced coughs in children at risk of allergy.[12]

OMEGA 3 is also good for pregnant moms, reducing high blood pressure, circulatory problems, pain and stiffness and migraine headaches.

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GNLD's FORMULA 4 PLUS is the world's first ***wholefood, organic*** *supplement containing a broad spectrum of vitamins & minerals and is the only supplement containing all three essential fatty acids vital for cellular development & functioning.*
GNLD's NUTRISHAKE is a delicious protein supplement containing all 22 amino acids. Low in calories and containing essential vitamins and minerals, Nutrishake is the perfect choice for pregnant mothers. Available in 3 delicious flavours, chocolate, strawberry & vanilla, it is a convenient meal replacement.
GNLD's OMEGA 3 PLUS is the only complete Omega 3 supplement available in the world today, containing all 8 Omega factors, as found in nature and is endorsed by the ***Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists.*** *Both GNLD's OMEGA 3 and OMEGA 3 PLUS are guaranteed pure (in fact they are health screened for more than 160 pollutants & contaminants, with a tolerance factor of zero!) The potency is also guaranteed.*
GNLD's CALMAG calcium & magnesium and CHELATED IRON supplements are double amino acid chelated, providing significantly improved absorption.

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As a pregnant mom you owe it to your baby to give it everything it needs to grow and develop into its full potential. Diet and supplementation are two aspects that only you can control. Make sure you give your baby the very best start to life.

THE NEED FOR SUPPLEMENTATION CONTINUES AFTER BIRTH

Do continue with an optimum nutrition programme after the birth of your baby - the stress of new motherhood and sleepless nights, coupled with the extra nutritional needs of breastfeeding, make this important for your health, as well as providing your baby with all the nutrients it needs. According to Patrick Holford in "The Optimum Nutrition Bible", zinc and vitamin B6 will reduce the likelihood of postnatal depression.

Omega 3 and the Newborn: Research shows that a baby's need for DHA peaks in the last trimester of pregnancy and continues for the first two years of its life. DHA content of the brain increases 3 to 5 times in the last trimester and again during the first three months following birth. While in the mother's womb, the foetus relies entirely on the mother for its critical supply of DHA. Though it is thought that many developmental problems associated with a DHA deficiency during gestation are carried forward throughout life, some research shows that dietary abundance for the newborn has a corrective effect. Pre-term infants fed fish oil supplements, had better visual acuity at two and four months than those not fed these OMEGA-3 fatty acids.[8]

Mother's milk is the infant's only natural food that contains DHA. The DHA content of the mother's milk is directly influenced by a mother's diet, in particular, the amount of fish she eats.[9]
Vegetarian women have less than half the DHA of their omnivorous counterparts, while women who consume fish regularly have up to twice as much DHA as those who do not. Most importantly, women who make fish oil supplements part of their diet can increase the DHA content of their milk up to five-fold.[10]

References:
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[4] D.Benton, Mol. Nutr. Food Res. 2010, 54, 457–470
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[6] Advances in Experimental Medical Biology, vol. 318, pp 285-294 1992
[7] American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, vol. 35, pp 617-623, 1982
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[9] Lipids, vol. 27, pp 848-857, 1992
[10] American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, vol. 40, pp 780-785, 1984
[11] Gilliland, F., American Thoracic Society, International Conference, May 2004
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Try the following receipe for preventing stretch marks:
½ cup virgin olive oil
¼ cup aloe vera gel
6 capsules Vit E, cut open
4 capsules Vit A, cut open

Mix all the ingredients together in a blender. Pour the mixture into a jar and store in the refrigerator.
Once a day, apply the oil all over the abdomen, hips & thighs. If you do this regularly, you may be able to prevent stretch marks.

From: Prescription for Nutritional Healing, J.F & P.A. Balch