



## PRENATAL VITAMINS

Even if you eat a healthy diet during pregnancy, it is hard to get enough of some key nutrients from food alone. Doctors recommend a prenatal vitamin to make sure you get enough nutrients every day.

### WHEN SHOULD I START TAKING A PRENATAL VITAMIN?

The best time to start taking vitamins is before pregnancy! If you are not taking a prenatal vitamin, start right away.

### WHICH PRENATAL VITAMIN SHOULD I USE?

Your prenatal vitamin should contain these three important nutrients:

- Iron - 27 mg
- Iodine - 150 mcg
- Folic Acid - 400 mcg or more

A prenatal vitamin with these nutrients will likely contain adequate amounts of other nutrients.

### WHY ARE THESE THREE NUTRIENTS SO IMPORTANT?

**Iron:** Your body will make lots of extra blood to support the pregnancy. It takes iron to make blood. Because of the increase in blood, many pregnant women become low in iron or “anemic”. Pregnant women low in iron are at greater risk of having a baby too early and too small. What can you do?

- Check your prenatal vitamin. Does it have at least 27 mg of iron? Gummy vitamins do not contain iron.
- If your doctor prescribes extra iron, take it with water or juice rather than milk. Drink plenty of fluids and include more fiber in your diet.



**Iodine:** Iodine is important for the development of your baby's brain and nervous system.

**Folic Acid:** You can lower your chance of having a baby with birth defects of the brain or spine by having enough folic acid in your body before pregnancy and in early pregnancy.

## **HOW CAN I PAY FOR MY PRENATAL VITAMIN?**

Ask your health care provider for a prescription.

- Medical Assistance will cover your prenatal vitamin.
- If you have private health insurance, ask the insurance company's Member Services if your plan covers the prescribed prenatal vitamin.
- If you need to purchase a prenatal vitamin, ask your pharmacist to recommend a low cost prenatal vitamin with iron.

## **I HAVE NAUSEA. WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO TAKE MY PRENATAL VITAMIN?**

Here are some ideas:

- Try taking the prenatal vitamin at a different time of day.
- Take the vitamin with food.
- Take half the vitamin in the morning and other half later in the day.
- Chew gum or suck on hard candy after taking your prenatal vitamin.
- If you are still getting sick, do not stop taking vitamins! Ask your health care provider if you could take one standard multivitamin with iron or one children's chewable multivitamin with iron. Once you are feeling better, take your prenatal vitamin again.

If these ideas do not work for you, ask your health care provider for other options.

