

Vitamins and Minerals

Client Handout

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Pregnant women need more of almost every vitamin and mineral than women who are not pregnant. Most of these increased nutrient requirements can be met through a carefully planned, nutritious diet. But often most women can't eat enough foods high in iron and folic acid to meet current recommendations. The following are a list of Vitamins and Minerals and the role they play in pregnancy.

Critical vitamins and minerals include folic acid, iron, zinc, iodine, vitamin A, vitamin D and calcium. Large amounts of Vitamin A can be dangerous; pregnant women should avoid taking more than the Daily Value (5,000 international units) of Vitamin A.

Folic acid- This B vitamin is particularly important before conception and during the first trimester. It may reduce the risk of neural tube defects, including spina bifida, anencephaly and encephalocele.

Iron - This mineral is vital during pregnancy, because it develops red blood cells needed to deliver oxygen to your baby. The amount of iron needed during pregnancy is two times the amount recommended for non-pregnant women. Iron is required for the formation of tissue for both your baby and the placenta.

Zinc- This mineral aids in the development of your baby's body tissues and may help reduce neural tube defects.

Vitamin A- This vitamin promotes healthy skin, cell growth and resistance to infection. Vitamin A is central to healthy embryonic development, cellular and tissue growth, the healthy development of eyes, hearts, ears, skin and mucous membranes. It also assists in resisting infections and repairing tissue.

Vitamin C- This vitamin is essential for healthy gums, teeth and bones. It also improves iron absorption.

Vitamin D- This vitamin helps build your baby's bones and also regulates calcium absorption.

Potassium- A mineral important for maintaining fluid balance in cells.

Calcium- is essential for strong bone and teeth production.

Iodine- Iodine is vital for good thyroid function, which in turn is essential for health. Iodine deficiency during pregnancy and early infancy can result in cretinism