

Importance of Iron during pregnancy



- **Human body needs iron for several reasons:**

- It's essential for making hemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen to other cells.
- It's an important component of myoglobin (a protein that helps supply oxygen to muscles), collagen (a protein in bone, cartilage, and other connective tissue), and many enzymes.

- **But during pregnancy, women need a lot more of this crucial mineral. Here's why:**

- The amount of blood in body increases during pregnancy until she has almost 50 percent more blood than usual, so she needs more iron to make more hemoglobin.
- Pregnant women need extra iron for her baby and placenta, especially in the second and third trimesters.
- Many women need more because they start their pregnancy with insufficient stores of iron.
- Iron-deficiency anemia during pregnancy is associated with preterm delivery, low birth weight, and infant mortality.

(Source: http://www.babycenter.com/0_iron-in-your-pregnancy-diet_1468.bc)

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Importance of Folic Acid during pregnancy



- Folic acid is a form of the B vitamin that aids in the regular cellular development and regeneration, and is especially crucial within the first weeks of unborn baby's development.
- It helps to insure proper formation of the brain and spinal cord.
- Without folic acid there is a higher chance of miscarriage, and a 1 in 1000 chance that the child ends up with a Neural Tube Disorder (NTD).
- Neural Tube Defects can manifest themselves as a number of different conditions upon birth, including spina bifida and anencephaly.
- Folic Acid helps prevent **Neural Tube Defects in pregnancy**

(Source- http://www.womenshealthcaretopics.com/bn_Folic_Acid_During_Pregnancy.htm)

(Neural tube defects are birth defects of the brain and spinal cord. The two most common neural tube defects are spina bifida and anencephaly. In spina bifida, the fetal spinal column doesn't close completely during the first month of pregnancy. There is usually nerve damage that causes at least some paralysis of the legs. In anencephaly, much of the brain does not develop. Babies with anencephaly are either stillborn or die shortly after birth.)

(Source: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/neuraltubedefects.html>)

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