

Do I require more vitamins and minerals in Pregnancy?

An expecting mother and her baby in her womb need more. More in terms of care, compassion, food, nutrients, vitamins and minerals. The additional requirements are for a number of reasons – placenta formation, development of teeth, hair and muscles along with brain development.



The list of the vitamins and minerals that are needed at all times are – iron, folic acid, iodine, zinc, to list a few. The following are the list and the details of the top 10.

Iron:

A requirement of 38 mg of iron is required in the form of organic food or supplements. The increased demands if not met can cause complications such as anemia. Moreover the iron is required for fetus and placenta growth and development. Iron also plays a major role in the formation of hemoglobin as 40-50% increase is needed in maternal blood volume. This requirement can be addressed by liberal diet supplementation of lean red meat, spinach, cereals, iron fortified grains, vegetables. Some women can also be recommended iron therapy with ferrous sulfate pills.

Folic Acid:

A requirement of 400 µg of folic acid is required in the form of organic food or supplements. Folic acid is needed for synthesis of essential components of DNA, RNA and development of red blood cells. Folic Acid during the last trimester prevents megaloblastic anemia and reduces the incidences of neural tube defects. The deficiency of Folic Acid may lead to abortion, preterm baby, low birth weight, anencephaly (absence of brain), PIH. The best sources of Folic Acid include – green leafy vegetables, dark yellow fruits & vegetables, peas, beans, nuts.

Iodine:

The requisite requirement for iodine is 125 mg. Deficiency can lead to abortion, congenital anomalies, cretinism in child. The best sources of iodine are – iodized salt, sea food.

Zinc:

Deficiency can lead to fetal mortality, fetal malformations, preterm delivery. The best sources of Zinc are leafy vegetables, pulses.

Manganese:

It helps in the growth of babies and the best sources for manganese are – beans, cereals, nuts.

The other vitamins that are required by the pregnant mother and developing baby are:

- **Thiamine** – Helps to relieve nausea. Sources- rice, whole cereals, wheat germ
- **Riboflavin:** Deficiency can interfere with cartilage formation leading to shortening of bones and fusion of ribs, eczema. Sources- pulses, leafy vegetables.
- **Vitamin E** : Reduces number of spontaneous abortions and still births. It effects the growth and availability of oxygen to the fetus. Sources- oils, nuts.
- **Vitamin K:** Prevents neonatal hemorrhage. Sources- curd, leafy vegetables, liver.
- **Vitamin C:** Low levels associated with premature rupture of fetal membranes and increased neonatal death rates. It is required for healthy gums, teeth and strong bones . Sources- citrus fruits/ broccoli/ tomatoes/ fortified fruit juices.