

Title: Maternal fish oil supplementation during pregnancy and lactation

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Abstract:

Fish oil supplements are already being targeted to pregnant women. They come to clinic looking for advice. The real bottom line is that this is an optional supplement to take during pregnancy and lactation. It has not been shown to cause harm, and is possibly linked with improved intelligence scores in children.

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FISH OIL SUPPLEMENTATION IN PREGNANCY AND LACTATION

Latest studies show that taking fish oil supplements during pregnancy and while breastfeeding is linked to higher intelligence scores in children.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME AND MY BABY?

Doctors have known for years that moms need to get enough folic acid during pregnancy to prevent certain defects in brain formation of the baby. This is why doctors recommend that pregnant women, or women who could become pregnant, take a vitamin with folic acid.

New research is showing that another supplement may be beneficial to babies during their formation. This new supplement is called “fish oil”. Its full name is docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), and is also known as “Omega 3”.

Studies have shown that moms taking fish oil supplements during pregnancy and during breastfeeding have babies that score higher on intelligence testing when they are 4 years old.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD DO I NEED TO KNOW?

This new research is just in the beginning stages, and larger trials need to be done.

So far, these trials have shown increased intelligence, but children have only been followed until 4 years old. Longer studies must be done to see if these effects last.



DO YOU HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

PLEASE ASK YOUR DOCTOR.

Original study:

Maternal Supplementation With Very-Long-Chain n-3 Fatty Acids During Pregnancy and Lactation Augments Children's IQ at 4 Years of Age.

Ingrid B. Helland, Lars Smith, Kristin Saarem, Ola D. Saugstad and Christian A. Drevon.

Pediatrics 2003;111:e39-e44. DOI: 10.1542/peds.111.1.e39