

Prenatal Vitamins

What you need and what you can skip

Prenatal vitamins are important, but with so many options at different price points, it's hard to know what really matters.



WHAT YOU NEED:

- ✓ **Folic acid** – Reduces the risk of neural tube defects. Look for at least 400 mcg. “Folate” and “folic acid” both work.
- ✓ **Iron** – Prevents anemia, which can cause tiredness, dizziness, or depression.
- ✓ **Vitamin C** – Helps your body absorb iron.
- ✓ **Vitamin B12** – If you're vegan or mostly plant-based, make sure your prenatal includes this!

WHAT'S NICE TO HAVE:

These items have mixed evidence, or are based on theory without evidence.

- ? **DHA** – May lower the risk of preterm birth. Found in fish.
- ? **Choline** – Some evidence for baby brain development. Found in eggs and meat.
- ? **Vitamin D and Calcium** – Only useful if your diet is low in them. No strong evidence of benefit otherwise.

WHAT YOU CAN SKIP:

Often included, but don't offer clear benefits unless you're deficient. Not harmful, just not worth paying extra for.

- ✗ Vitamins A, E, K, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, biotin, magnesium, zinc

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Vitamins are vitamins. Expensive ones aren't better. Any brand that contains the important ingredients will do.