

[IMAGE]

## Can a Prenatal Supplement Reduce Your Child's Autism Risk?

By Editorial Staff

Taking a prenatal multivitamin / multimineral has long been regarded as essential for ensuring mother and child attain adequate micronutrient intake, as well as helping preventing neural tube defects of the brain and spinal cord at birth. Now research suggests the daily prenatal – particularly when taken early in pregnancy – may also reduce the risk of autism in children at higher-than-average risk of developing the condition.

Published in *JAMA Psychiatry*, the study found that children at risk for autism (because one or more older siblings had previously been diagnosed) were significantly more likely to develop autism if the mother did not take a prenatal supplement in the first month of the pregnancy: only 14.1 percent diagnosed with autism vs. 32.7 percent of children whose mothers did not take a prenatal.

According to the researchers, a familiar prenatal micronutrient may be at least partially responsible for the reduced risk of autism: folic acid (vitamin B9) – the same vitamin responsible for the reduced risk of birth defects mentioned above. Iron also appeared to exert a protective effect.

So, taking a prenatal supplement can help you and your developing child stay healthy. But the power of supplementation doesn't stop there. Talk to your doctor about your dietary habits and current health, and whether a comprehensive multivitamin / multimineral, or specific vitamin / mineral supplementation, is right for you.

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