

Omega-3 Fatty Acids -- Benefits and Sources

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recommends that pregnant women have DHA 300mg per day, an omega-3 fatty acid, to enhance the baby's brain and eye development. Research shows that pregnant women who consume sufficient amounts of omega-3 fatty acids can reduce the risk of preterm delivery and the prevalence of low-birth-weight babies by relaxing the uterine smooth muscle and vessels during pregnancy. Other benefits of omega-3 fatty acids include the increased nutritional value of breast milk which continues to facilitate the early vision and brain development of infants. DHA may also reduce the prevalence of preeclampsia and postpartum depression and has been shown to benefit cardiovascular health. Omega-fatty acids, including DHA, are obtained by eating foods such as safe fish, vegetable oils and eggs or other foods enriched with DHA. Omega-3 supplements, included in some prenatal vitamins, are another source. Please consider these foods and supplements when trying to conceive, during pregnancy and while nursing for optimal health.