



Something Fishy

Fish oil has been touted for the past couple of decades as a boost to the body. Research has shown that pregnant women who take fish oil during the last trimester (about 4 g per day) lengthen their gestation and may therefore prevent recurrent preterm birth (Olsen et al, 1992).

Reddy et al (1994) studied the effects of maternal vegetarian diets, pregnancy outcome and essential fatty acid status of the newborn. Babies born to vegetarian mothers without fish oil supplementation showed 5.6 days shorter gestation, lower birth weight, shorter length, and smaller head circumference.

Gradual depletion of maternal omega-3 fatty acids, especially DHA, during pregnancy has been noted (Otto et al, 1997, Hornstra et al, 1995). Since breast milk is supposed to have relatively high concentrations of DHA and EPA, decreased levels of

DHA may remain low for some time postpartum, particularly in lactating women, therefore could magnify postpartum depression (Holman et al, 1991). In addition, Omega-3 fatty acids are crucial for fetal and neonatal brain and nervous system development (Holman et al 1991).

Omega-3 fatty acids have shown that infants supplemented with fish oils had improved immune function (Damsgaard et al, 2007). However, it is probably easier for breast feeding mothers to supplement it so it is more abundant in breast milk.

Cod liver oil specifically contains small amounts of vitamin K and D which help in bone formation and density. Omega-3 fatty acids in cod liver oil help to nourish the brain and nervous system in the fetus during pregnancy, help prevent osteoporosis and lower cholesterol in adults (Yokoyama et al, 2007).

Omega-3 supplementation showed significant improvement in children with behavioral and learning disabilities (Sinn et al, 2007).

In Norway, children born to mothers who were supplementing with cod liver oil (2 g/day) during pregnancy and the first 3 months of lactation scored higher on mental processing tests at 4 years of age when compared to those whose mothers did not supplement with cod liver oil (Helland et al, 2003)

Please contact Oriental Health Solutions with any questions.

To your health!

OHS Staff

References:

- Jerry Cott, PhD, Scientific Director & Chief Science Officer at Scientific Herbal Products, Inc.
- Wikipedia

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