

Ask Leyla: Getting ready for pregnancy

Q: I want to ask you what basic supplements and their dosages (and foods) should a woman take who is considering starting a family. It's not happening just yet but to get my body ready. I understand it may be a good idea to have a checkup and ascertain any vitamin deficiencies or any other abnormalities prior to becoming pregnant, but I'm not sure that is in the plan just yet.

If vitamin D levels are low, should a woman continue supplementation while pregnant? What would be a safe dosage?

A: I commend you for being proactive about your health before becoming pregnant. Doing so gives you every conceivable chance (pun intended!) for a healthy pregnancy and baby.



For starters, get a check-up to see if any micronutrient deficiencies exist, along with the standard blood tests that your practitioner will order.

It also is a good idea to get a toxic metals urine test at this time to make sure you don't have elevated levels of mercury or lead. If you do, a supervised detox would be appropriate before becoming pregnant. Don't consume seafood high in mercury such as tuna, swordfish, shark and king mackerel. Opt for wild Alaskan salmon and sardines instead.

Eating a whole foods diet and taking a daily multivitamin would be appropriate, as well as addressing any nutrient deficiencies. It is absolutely appropriate to take at least 2,000 IU of vitamin D3 during pregnancy—and more if your levels are found to be low.

Finally, if you're not already, get yourself to a healthy weight before becoming pregnant.

To your health!