Not Too Much, Not Too Little: Finding the Goldilocks of Vitamins and Minerals

Ever wonder if you're getting the right amount of vitamins and minerals during pregnancy or breastfeeding? Like Goldilocks, you don't want too little or too much — you want ***just right***. Even though it took Goldilocks multiple tries to find the right size chair and the right bowl of porridge, it doesn't have to take you that long to find the right amount of vitamins and minerals for you!

Everyone has a 3% chance of developing a birth defect during pregnancy. Getting the right amount of vitamins and minerals FOR YOU is not expected to increase the risk for issues during pregnancy and it is not expected to increase the risk for side effects during breastfeeding.

Most people in the United States get some vitamins and minerals in their diet. However, your healthcare provider might have specific goals for you to get certain amounts of a vitamin or mineral, particularly during pregnancy or breastfeeding. One way to get that extra support during pregnancy is to take a prenatal vitamin that has at least 600 mcg of folic acid (for more information on folic acid, check out our fact sheet: https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/folic-acid/.

If you also take other supplements, or drink juices and shakes that list vitamins on the nutrition label, you could be getting more than you need. Reading nutrition labels help you track how many vitamins and minerals you are getting into your body.

DRIs: What Are They?

DRI stands for Dietary Reference Intake. DRIs are a list of nutritional values that are used to guide people to make sure they are getting a well-balanced diet that supports their health. There are a couple different DRIs, but the ones that are used in this blog are called RDA and UL.

- **RDA (Recommended Dietary Allowance):** The average daily amount of a vitamin or mineral that most people need.
- **UL (Tolerable Upper Limit):** The maximum safe amount you can take in a day without raising the risk of side effects.

Not every vitamin and mineral has an RDA or UL. For the vitamins and minerals that do have DRIs, it's typically recommended to aim for the RDA every day, unless your healthcare provider tells you differently. For the ones that do have DRIs, they can change based on age or when pregnant or breastfeeding. You will also get many nutrients from your regular diet, so supplements are intended to help fill in gaps — not overload your system.

Why Supplement Safety Matters

Supplements are regulated differently than prescription drugs. Even though the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates supplements, the FDA doesn't check every product for safety or effectiveness before it goes on the shelf. This means labels may not always tell the whole story, and some products could include unknown or unlisted ingredients.

Talk to your healthcare provider before taking a supplement to make sure you are getting the right amount of vitamins and minerals to support your health. You can contact MotherToBaby to get more information on a supplement you are considering.

Have more questions about supplements or exposures during pregnancy or breastfeeding? You can reach a teratogen-information specialist at MotherToBaby.org.

DRIs for Vitamins and Minerals During Pregnancy and Breastfeeding:

Name	RDA-pregnancy	UL-pregnancy	RDA-lactation	UL-lactation
Biotin	14+ years old: 30 mcg	Unknown	14+ years old: 35 mcg	Unknown
Boron	Unknown	14-18 years old: 17 mg 19+ years old: 20 mg	Unknown	14-18 years old: 17 mg 19+ years old: 20 mg

Calcium	14-18 years old: 1,300 mg 19+ years old: 1,000 mg	14-18 years old: 3,000 mg 19+ years old: 2,500 mg	14-18 years old: 1,300 mg 19+ years old: 1,000 mg	14-18 years old: 3,000 mg 19+ years old: 2,500 mg
Choline	14+ years old: 450 mg	14-18 years old: 3,000 mg 19+ years old: 3,500 mg	14+ years old: 550 mg	14-18 years old: 3,000 mg 19+ years old: 3,500 mg
Chromium	14-18 years old: 29 mcg 19+ years old: 30 mcg	Unknown	14-18 years old: 44 mcg 19+ years old: 45 mcg	Unknown
Copper	14+ years old: 1,000 mcg	14-18 years old: 8,000 mcg 19+ years old: 10,000 mcg	14+ years old: 1,300 mcg	14-18 years old: 8,000 mcg 19+ years old: 10,000 mcg

Folic Acid	14+ years old: 600 mcg DFE	14-18 years old: 800 mcg 19+ years old: 1,000 mcg	14+ years old: 500 mcg DFE	14-18 years old: 800 mcg 19+ years old: 1,000 mcg
Iodine	14+ years old: 220 mcg	14-18 years old: 900 mcg 19+ years old: 1,100 mcg	14+ years old: 290 mcg	14-18 years old: 900 mcg 19+ years old: 1,100 mcg
Iron	14+ years old: 27 mg	14+ years old: 45 mg	14-18 years old: 10 mg 19+ years old: 9 mg	14+ years old: 45 mg
Magnesium	14-18 years old: 400 mg 19-30 years old: 350 mg 30+ years old: 360 mg	9+ years old: 350 mg*	14-18 years old: 360 mg 19-30 years old: 310 mg 30+ years old: 320 mg	9+ years old: 350 mg*

Manganese	14+ years old: 2.0 mg	14-18 years old: 9 mg 19+ years old: 11 mg	14+ years old: 2.6 mg	14-18 years old: 9 mg 19+ years old: 11 mg
Molybdenum	14+ years old: 50 mcg	14-18 years old: 1,700 mcg 19+ years old: 2,000 mcg	14+ years old: 50 mcg	14-18 years old: 1,700 mcg 19+ years old: 2,000 mcg
Niacin	14+ years old: 18 mg NE	14-18 years old: 30 mg 19+ years old: 35 mg	14+ years old: 17 mg NE	14-18 years old: 30 mg 19+ years old: 35 mg
Omega-3 fatty acids	14+ years old: 1,400 mg	Unknown	14+ years old: 1,300 mg	Unknown
Pantothenic acid	14+ years old: 6 mg	Unknown	14+ years old: 7 mg	Unknown

Phosphorus	14-18 years old: 1,250 mg 19+ years old: 700 mg	14+ years old: 3,500 mg	14-18 years old: 1,250 mg 19+ years old: 700 mg	14+ years old: 4,000 mg
Potassium	14-18 years old: 2,600 mg 19+ years old: 2,900 mg	Unknown	14-18 years old: 2,500 mg 19+ years old: 2,800 mg	Unknown
Riboflavin	14+ years old: 1.4 mg	Unknown	14+ years old: 1.6 mg	Unknown
Selenium	14+ years old: 60 mcg	14+ years old: 400 mcg	14+ years old: 70 mcg	14+ years old: 400 mcg
Thiamin	14+ years old: 1.4 mg	Unknown	14+ years old: 1.4 mg	Unknown
Vitamin A	14-18 years old: 750 mcg RAE 19+ years old: 770 mcg RAE	14-18 years old: 2,800 mcg 19+ years old: 3,000 mcg	14-18 years old: 1,200 mcg RAE 19+ years old: 1,300 mcg RAE	14-18 years old: 2,800 mcg 19+ years old: 3,000 mcg

Vitamin B6	14+ years old: 1.9 mg	14-18 years old: 80 mg 19+ years old: 100 mg	14+ years old: 2.0 mg	14-18 years old: 80 mg 19+ years old: 100 mg
Vitamin B12	14+ years old: 2.6 mcg	Unknown	14+ years old: 2.8 mcg	Unknown
Vitamin C	14-18 years old: 80 mg 19+ years old: 85 mg	14-18 years old: 1,800 mg 19+ years old: 2,000 mg	14-18 years old: 115 mg 19+ years old: 120 mg	14-18 years old: 1,800 mg 19+ years old: 2,000 mg
Vitamin D	14+ years old: 15 mcg (600 IU)	14+ years old: 100 mcg (4,000 IU)	14+ years old: 15 mcg (600 IU)	14+ years old: 100 mcg (4,000 IU)
Vitamin E	14+ years old: 15 mg	14-18 years old: 800 mg 19+ years old: 1,000 mg	14+ years old: 19 mg	14-18 years old: 800 mg 19+ years old: 1,000 mg

Vitamin K	14-18 years old: 75 mcg 19+ years old: 90 mcg	Unknown	14-18 years old: 75 mcg 19+ years old: 90 mcg	Unknown
Zinc	14-18 years old: 12 mg 19+ years old: 11 mg	14-18 years old: 34 mg 19+ years old: 40 mg	14-18 years old: 13 mg 19+ years old: 12 mg	14-18 years old: 34 mg 19+ years old: 40 mg

(This chart has last been updated on 9/29/2025)

Note: The UL for magnesium only applies to supplements. You can safely get more from food since the RDA includes dietary magnesium.

Where Can I Find More Information?

MotherToBaby has fact sheets on a couple of the common vitamins and minerals that might be found in a multivitamin or a prenatal vitamin. For more detailed information on a specific vitamin or mineral, check out our fact sheets below:

- **Folic acid** – https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/folic-acid/
- **Iodine** – https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/iodine-pregnancy/
- **Iron** – https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/iron/

- **Vitamin A** – https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/vitamin-a/
- **Vitamin B12** – https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/vitamin-b12/
- **Vitamin C** – https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/vitamin-c/
- **Vitamin D** – https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/vitamin-d/
- **Vitamin E** – https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/vitamin-e/
- **Vitamin K** – https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/vitamin-k/
- **Zinc** – https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/zinc/

References

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Questions? Call 866.626.6847 | Text 855.999.3525 | Email or Chat at MotherToBaby.org.

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