What to Look For In a Prenatal Vitamin
The prenatal vitamin industry is failing women.

Fertility, pregnancy, and postpartum are some of the most physically and mentally demanding times in a woman’s life. Unfortunately, the prenatal vitamin industry is failing women, leaving 95% depleted when nutrition for body and mind is needed most.

Most prenatal vitamins are designed around Recommended Dietary Allowances, often referred to as RDAs. RDAs were originally set using data from adult men – dating all the way back to the Army in WWII. The RDAs were created to advise the Army on guidelines for “good nutrition” to avoid diseases. Since then, RDAs have been expanded for the general public.
What’s the issue with perinatal RDAs?

RDAs are based on outdated research methods and studies conducted mainly on white men. In fact, pregnant and breastfeeding women were intentionally excluded from 83% of the studies chosen as the basis for the current perinatal RDAs.

Including pregnant and breastfeeding women in clinical research was considered too risky and so these groups were excluded from clinical research under the guise of "protection". Ironically, their exclusion ultimately led to misinformed recommendations and a major gap in our collective understanding of women's bodies, which had a devastating impact on millions of women and their families.

The nutrient levels do not take into account the unique and demanding physiology of fertility, pregnancy, or postpartum, and many levels are not set to support the mother in addition to the baby. Over 630 nutrition studies support the finding that for many nutrients, the current nutritional guidelines for pregnancy and lactation are set well below optimal levels.

Take choline as an example. More and more research is showing that the RDA for choline consumption should be much higher than it is to support a baby’s brain development. Yet 90% or more women aren't even reaching the current RDA level and most prenatals don't even include choline in their formulation at all!

Why isn't this research making its way into the official perinatal nutrition guidelines? On average it takes 17 years for new research to be incorporated. The lag between research and RDAs means women aren't receiving the optimal support that they so desperately need.
How We Developed the Needed Standard
The Needed Standard

There is overwhelming evidence that higher standards of nutrition improve fertility, birth outcomes, and the trajectory of lives. Despite this, most prenatal vitamins are peddling bare minimum nutrition. You deserve radically better.

That's why we built a collective of experts, from nutritionists to OBGYNs, to create the antidote to nutritional depletion. The Needed Prenatal Multi is the research backed and expert vetted daily supplement designed to end perinatal depletion and fully support a woman and her baby’s needs.

The constantly improving Needed Standard takes you to unrivaled levels of nutrition and keeps you there through fertility, pregnancy and postpartum.

Our Uncompromising Promise

- Unrivaled dosing standards, far beyond bare minimums
- Designed to maximize bioavailability
- Every form, nutrient, and supplier vetted by our experts
- Zero tolerance for unwanted fillers
- Always 3rd party tested
Vitamin B9 (Folate)

918mcg DFE as L-Methylfolate, Glucosamine Salt Quatrefolic®

We avoid Folic Acid, as many women aren't able to efficiently utilize this form. Methylfolate is bioavailable and ready to be used by the body. Our dose provides enough Folate to be effective, while still being safe for all women. Folate is crucial for early fetal development, and to help prevent neural tube defects. It also supports a variety of metabolic functions and is essential for both mom and baby.

How It Supports Mom
- Mood support, as it helps produce several key neurotransmitters
- Heart health
- Healthy red blood cells
- Immune support detoxification

How It Supports Baby
- Normal neural tube development
- Normal midline development including the mouth
- DNA and red blood cell synthesis
- Cell division, i.e. how baby grows

Choline

400mg as Choline L(+)-Bitartrate (VitaCholine™)

Choline Bitartrate is an optimal form for providing a concentrated dose that's easily absorbed. Most women do not consume enough choline in their daily diets and supplementation is high beneficial. Most prenatal vitamins contain too little to be supportive (55mg of Choline or less) as it's a bulky nutrient that can be difficult to formulate with. Our dose is optimally supportive and safe.

How It Supports Mom
- Healthy metabolism normal liver function
- Efficient uptake of Omega-3 DHA
- Memory and sleep-wake cycle function, due to its role in synthesizing the neurotransmitter, acetylcholine
- Healthy cell membranes
- Healthy blood pressure

How It Supports Baby
- Normal neural tube development
- Optimal brain development, including cognitive performance
- Proper DNA synthesis
- Help mitigate some of the adverse effects of prenatal stress
- Transporting Omega-3 DHA from mom to baby

Questions? Reach us at hello@thisisneeded.com
Vitamin D

4,000 IU / 100 mcg as D3 Cholecalciferol

Vitamin D3 is technically not a vitamin, but a prohormone. Prohormones are the building blocks of fully formed hormones. Your skin produces Vitamin D3 when it is exposed to sunlight. But, most women don’t get enough sun and it is difficult to get enough Vitamin D from food. In addition, many women contain genetic variations that predispose them to lower levels of Vitamin D. Vitamin D3 is more readily used by the body than Vitamin D2. Our dose provides enough to be highly supportive and safe.

How It Supports Mom
- Immune function
- Calcium and phosphorus absorption
- Support detoxification
- Healthy blood pressure
- Healthy full-term pregnancy

How It Supports Baby
- Immune function cell division, i.e. how baby grows
- Forming bones and teeth
- Respiratory function

Vitamin B6

40mg as Pyridoxal-5-Phosphate

Pyridoxal-5-Phosphate is the active form of Vitamin B6. It is bioavailable and ready to be used by the body. B6 is an essential vitamin for a variety of metabolic functions, especially protein metabolism. Our dose is especially supportive during the first trimester to support nausea, and is highly safe. Many women are low in B6, as hormonal birth control significantly depletes the body of it.

How It Supports Mom
- Helps minimize nausea healthy blood sugar healthy mood through
- Production of several key
- Neurotransmitters supporting Magnesium absorption
- Protein utilization, by interconverting amino acids

How It Supports Baby
- DNA synthesis
- Brain and nervous system development
- Healthy birth weight

Vitamin B12

200 mcg 100mcg each of Adenosylcobalamin and Methylcobalamin

Adenosylcobalamin and Methylcobalamin are the two active coenzyme forms xthat are readily usable by the body. Adenosylcobalamin supports energy and a healthy metabolism, and is rarely included in prenatals. Vitamin B12 is required for the development, myelination, and function of the central nervous system; healthy red blood cell formation; and DNA synthesis. Our combination provides enough Vitamin B12 to be highly supportive, while still being safe.

How It Supports Mom
- Energy levels
- Healthy metabolism
- Nervous system health
- Stress support

How It Supports Baby
- DNA and red blood cell synthesis
- Nervous system development
- Works synergistically with Folate to support normal neural tube development
- Cognitive development
**Vitamin A**

1,500 mcg RAE as 50% Beta Carotene and as 50% Retinyl Palmitate

Retinyl Palmitate is an active form that is more readily usable by the body than Beta Carotene, which is converted only as needed by the body, and in some women less efficiently due to genetic factors. Our combination provides enough Retinyl Palmitate to be both safe and effective.

**How It Supports Mom**
- Immune function
- Healthy skin and tissues
- Thyroid function
- Supports hormone production
- Placenta development
- Supports milk supply

**How It Supports Baby**
- Fetal facial feature development including eyes and ears
- Supports healthy birth weight and full-term gestation

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**Selenium**

200 mcg as selenomethionine

Selenomethione is the most well-absorbed form of selenium. Selenium needs are significantly increased in pregnancy and it is an essential mineral with antioxidant function. Selenium is essential to support a number of key processes, such as immune health, blood pressure and thyroid function, during conception, pregnancy and in postpartum. Many typical prenatals exclude selenium and most dose inadequately to properly support mom and baby.

**How It Supports Mom**
- Egg health and fertility
- Immune function
- Thyroid function
- Healthy blood pressure
- Healthy postpartum mood

**How It Supports Baby**
- Healthy birth weight
- Immune system development
- Healthy nervous system development

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**Zinc**

25 mg as Zinc bisglycinate

Zinc bound to glycine is optimally absorbed and gentle on the stomach. Zinc is an essential mineral with many crucial functions in perinatal health, including supporting egg quality, healthy conception, immune system health as well as fetal growth and development. Studies have shown that 25 mg of Zinc supplemented throughout pregnancy improves outcomes, while the typical prenatal falls short on this amount and tend to include less bioavailable forms.

**How It Supports Mom**
- Egg health and fertility
- Protein synthesis
- Immune function
- Healthy blood pressure

**How It Supports Baby**
- Fetal growth and development
- Healthy birth weight
- Healthy gestational term

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**Chromium**

120mcg as chromium picolinate

Chromium needs increase during pregnancy and breastfeeding, and are important to support healthy blood sugar levels. It also helps support healthy blood lipid levels. Chromium picolinate is highly bioavailable and well absorbed. The majority of typical prenatals do not include chromium, and those that do tend to include it in insufficient amounts or use inferior nutrient forms.

**How It Supports Mom**
- Healthy blood sugar levels
- Healthy blood lipid levels

**How It Supports Baby**
- Healthy glucose metabolism
What Else To Look For

Additional Nutrients

While we’ve covered the most crucial 8 nutrients needed in a prenatal, there are many more micronutrients needed before, during, and after pregnancy. We include 26 vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants in our prenatal. To learn more about all of these nutrients and their optimal forms and dosages, we’ve put together a deep dive here.

Third Party Testing

In addition to the forms and amounts of nutrients, we recommend seeking out a prenatal that doesn’t just talk the talk, but that walks the walk. When a product, like those from Needed, are third-party tested, it means they undergo independent testing by accredited laboratories to verify their purity, potency, and overall quality.

This additional layer of scrutiny provides peace of mind, knowing that our products meet the highest standards of safety and efficacy.

Third party testing is not only important to confirm that what you would expect from the label is actually in your supplement, but also to ensure that there is nothing you would not expect. Testing for microcontaminants and heavy metals ensures that the product is safe and of the highest quality.

We recommend looking for reputable independent third party certifications such as Clean Label Project, NSF or USP to help verify product quality.

Questions? Reach us at hello@thisisneeded.com
What to Avoid in a Prenatal
What’s not in your prenatal is as important as what is.

We are intentional about excluding the following:

**Nutrients You Don’t Need More Of Like Boron**

There is no RDA for Boron since an essential biological role for it has not been identified. Boron has been linked to helping make Vitamin D receptors more efficient, which is helpful! However, we already consume about a milligram of Boron daily, mostly from fruit and vegetables. And, we are otherwise unintentionally taking in Boron in drinking water or through other means as it is used regularly in glass, detergents, and agriculture. At high doses, Boron has been found to be a developmental and reproductive toxin in animals. For these reasons, we do not include Boron in our Prenatal Multi and suggest you avoid supplements that contain it.

**Potentially Dangerous Nutrient Forms**

Like Cyanocobalamin (B12) and Folic Acid (B9), as these inferior forms are not efficiently utilized and absorbed by the body. This poses a danger, because these nutrients are so crucial to the health and development of baby, and an inadequate amount would pose a risk.

**Ingredients Sourced Unsustainably Like Vegan D3**

We are mindful of what’s best for mothers AND mother Earth. That’s why we avoid using ingredients like Vegan D3, which is sourced from lichen that is critical to the Arctic tundra ecosystem and that grows extremely slowly.

**Unnecessary Fillers**

All ingredients in our products serve a purpose and are intentional. We have high standards for all ingredients, active and inactive alike. We additionally avoid the use of stearic acid, magnesium stearate, potassium sorbate, titanium dioxide, carrageenan, artificial colors and flavors.

**High Heavy Metal Loads**

(Found In Most Food-Based Vitamins)

Food-based prenatal vitamins and plant-based protein powders often contain higher amounts of heavy metals, due to poor soil quality.

We test for heavy metals in every batch and source our ingredients mindfully to keep women safe.
“I am one of the doctors that worked directly with Needed in creating this prenatal. It is so incredibly needed. We spent almost three years vetting every nutrient form, dose, and ingredient supplier to offer the most nourishing product. I'm excited to finally offer my patients and community of mothers and mothers-to-be, a prenatal without any compromise.”

Dr. Leah Gordon, Naturopathic Doctor

“As a nutritionist, I was picky when choosing a prenatal. This one has everything I was looking for!”

Anonymous Verified Buyer

“I have done a lot of research and this is the most comprehensive prenatal I could find. I also love that they share the science behind their ingredient selection.”

Anonymous Verified Buyer

Questions? Drop us a line at hello@thisisneeded.com or via Instagram @needed.

We also offer a live chat on our website thisisneeded.com on weekdays between 9-5pm PT.