

August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011

*A new study shows that women who take multivitamins regularly around the time of conception have a lower risk of pregnancies resulting in pre-term births and infants that are small for gestational age.*

## MULTIVITAMIN USE LOWERS RISK OF CERTAIN PREGNANCY COMPLICATIONS

**P**re-term birth (PTB) and small-for-gestational-age (SGA) births are leading risk factors of morbidity and mortality in newborns. Previous observations have indicated that multivitamins taken periconceptually (just before and just after a woman becomes pregnant) may decrease the risk of PTB and SGA.

The objective of a new study was to relate the timing and frequency of periconceptual multivitamin use to risk of a PTB or delivery of SGA infants.

Participants included 35,897 women in the Danish National Birth Cohort. The women were asked to report the number of weeks of multivitamin use during a 12-week periconceptual period. Researchers analyzed the relation between any multivitamin use and PTBs (less than 37 weeks) or SGA births. The timing (preconception and post-conception) and frequency of use were also analyzed. Regular users (4–6 weeks) and partial users (1–3 weeks) in each period were compared with nonusers.

The association between periconceptual multivitamin use and PTBs varied according to pre-pregnancy overweight status. Regular preconception and post-conception multivitamin use in women with a pre-pregnancy BMI <25 (normal weight) was associated with reduced risks of a PTB and preterm labor. The association between multivitamin use and PTB was not evident in women who were overweight. The risk of an SGA birth was decreased in multivitamin users regardless of their pre-pregnancy weight, with the strongest association in the post-conception period.

In this study, regular multivitamin use around the time of conception was associated with reductions in risk of PTBs in non-overweight women and of SGA regardless of their pre-pregnancy weight. This research supports the assertion that multivitamin use around the time of conception could be a safe and simple strategy to improve pregnancy outcomes.

*Janet M Catov et al. Periconceptual multivitamin use and risk of preterm or small-for-gestational-age births in the Danish National Birth Cohort.*