



# Folic Acid Supplementation in Pregnancy: Hitting Many Birds with one Stone

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### Dear Sir,

The protective role played by folic acid supplementation in pregnancy against the occurrence of neural tube defects in newborn, specifically anencephaly and spina bifida, is well-documented. In fact folic acid supplementation is being advised routinely to all pregnant women or females who are planning to conceive. <sup>[1]</sup> Low folate levels have been linked to the development of depression. Due to an increased demand for folate during pregnancy, there may be a dearth of this vitamin, which may be one of the causative factors for depression seen in pregnant women. The beneficial effects of folate in preventing depression has been studied in both animals and humans. It may even confer protection to the mother against depression upto 21 months after pregnancy. <sup>[2, 3]</sup>

In addition, it has been found that risk of development of autism spectrum disorders and developmental delay has been reduced in children by periconceptional maternal intake of folate. <sup>[4, 5]</sup> Furthermore, it can prevent the occurrence of congenital heart diseases, oral clefts and preterm birth in the fetus, while protecting the mother against anemia, and peripheral neuropathy. <sup>[6]</sup> Thus folate supplementation seems to have many beneficial effects towards health of both mother and child. This situation may be summarised by the idiom, 'hitting many birds with a single stone'.

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### Competing Interests

None Declared

### Reference

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