

## Communication 010/2026

18 February 2026

### **Folic acid and co.: Do pregnant women need to supplement their diet?**

**Expectant mothers should pay particular attention to certain micronutrients**

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During pregnancy, the need for some vitamins and minerals increases. On the one hand, the expectant mother herself needs higher amounts of certain micronutrients due to the profound physiological changes she is undergoing. On the other hand, the unborn child needs these nutrients for a healthy development. For the most part, the additional requirements can be met through a balanced and varied diet. However, pregnant women should take a few micronutrients in the form of supplements – one of them ideally even before becoming pregnant. Which one this is and to which of the others pregnant women should pay attention to has been summarised by the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) on its information platform [mikroco.info](https://mikroco.info).

Many women aim to follow a particularly healthy diet during pregnancy in order to provide themselves, and above all their unborn baby, with all the nutrients they need. In fact, a varied and balanced diet, as recommended by the [German Nutrition Society](#) (in German), will ensure that most vitamin and mineral requirements are met during pregnancy. Folic acid is one of the few micronutrients that should be taken in the form of supplements, even before becoming pregnant and in addition to folate-rich diet. This reduces the risk of neural tube defects in the child – birth defects also known as "open back" or spina bifida.

However, other micronutrients such as the vitamins A and D and the minerals iodine and iron are also critical during pregnancy. The information platform [mikroco.info](https://mikroco.info) provides short articles on the intake and supply of selected micronutrients among women in Germany. In addition, the platform explains whether or not taking supplements during pregnancy is recommended, and what pregnant women should pay attention to in order to avoid taking too much of certain nutrients, such as vitamin A.

In principle, according to the BfR, pregnant women should be even more cautious than other consumers when taking food supplements, over-the-counter medicines or seemingly

harmless natural preparations, and should not take them on their own without medical advice. Many preparations also contain ingredients whose effects have not always been thoroughly studied, especially with regard to pregnant women and unborn children.

**Further information for pregnant women and on the subject of micronutrients**

The BfR information page for pregnant women

<https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/about-us/risk-assessment/pregnant-people/>

Information portal microco.info on micronutrient requirements during pregnancy

<https://www.microco.info/general-information/supplements-do-i-need-them/micronutrient-requirements-during-pregnancy/>

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## About microco.info

The internet portal [www.microco.info](http://www.microco.info) provides information on vitamins, minerals and numerous other substances that we ingest with food or that are offered as food supplements. In addition, the individual pages contain the maximum levels of vitamins and minerals in food supplements and in fortified foods as recommended by the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR).



*This text version is a translation of the original German text which is the only legally binding version.*

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