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Glutathione for a Healthier Pregnancy

By Priya Shah

Glutathione for a Healthier Pregnancy

by: **Priya Shah**

All parents-to-be nurture the dream of a healthy pregnancy and baby.

But the modern environment and diet is deficient in many factors essential for the health of mother and fetus. One of those factors is antioxidants.

The role of antioxidants like folic acid in preventing birth defects like spina bifida and cleft palate is well known. It is now included in all prenatal vitamin supplements.

But the role of antioxidants like glutathione and Vitamin E in pregnancy is often overlooked.

Antioxidants and glutathione status play an important role in the development and growth of the fetus, maintenance of a healthy pregnancy – and even before pregnancy, in fertility and conception.

Glutathione is the body's master antioxidant. It helps to regenerate stores of other antioxidants like Vitamin C and E.

It also protects both mother and fetus from the damaging effects of free radicals and oxidative stress.

Many pregnancy complications and birth defects have been linked to oxidative stress, free radical damage and low glutathione levels in the mother and fetus.

The role of glutathione in the development of the foetus and placenta is crucial. Glutathione (GSH) can control cell differentiation, proliferation, and cell death – essential functions in the developing embryo.

In the placenta, glutathione detoxifies pollutants before they reach the developing child. Most substances or factors which cause birth defects (teratogens) are known to exert their embryotoxic effects because they cause oxidative stress.

Glutathione for a Healthier Pregnancy

The human placenta possesses a significant amount of glutathione S-transferase (GST) capable of detoxification or activation of drugs and pharmaceuticals during the critical period of organ development in the fetus.

Some drugs are known to cause birth defects in the growing fetus by generating free radicals, and depleting GSH stores.

In the early embryonic stages, the fetus is sensitive to the toxic and teratogenic effects of chemicals, whereas it is sensitive to carcinogenic effects during late fetal stages.

Carcinogens administered to the mother can be transferred through the placenta and induce cancer in the fetus. Many carcinogens are much more active in the fetus than in adults and they tend to act as abortifacients and teratogens as well.

Environmental and lifestyle factors are known to cause oxidative stress and lower glutathione levels – resulting in birth defects, abortion and miscarriages in pregnancy.

Some of the known teratogens (causing birth defects) in pregnancy include: Radiation Pesticides and Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Air pollution Heavy metals (mercury, cadmium, arsenic) Vinyl chloride Acrylonitrile Excess Oxygen (hyperoxia) Anti-psychotic and anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs) Thalidomide Cigarette smoke Alcohol (ethanol) consumption

Maternal health factors that increase free radicals and cause birth defects include: Diabetes Pre-eclampsia Infection and Inflammation

Glutathione and other antioxidants attenuate oxidative stress in pregnant women with inflammation or maternal conditions like diabetes and pre-eclampsia, and in fetuses at risk for developing cystic fibrosis.

Supplementation with glutathione precursors and antioxidants can decrease the incidence of birth defects and protect both mothers and the fetus from the damaging and possibly fatal consequences of pregnancy complications.

Glutathione (GSH) also prevents or minimizes the oxidative stress that occurs during labor and the birth process.

Perinatal or birth asphyxia/hypoxia (deprivation of oxygen supply to the brain) in preterm deliveries and labor can lead to cerebral palsy, respiratory distress syndrome, irreversible brain injury, and permanent neurological and intellectual handicaps.

Administration of the glutathione precursor, N-Acetyl-Cysteine (NAC), to the pregnant mother partially prevents oxidative stress during the birth process in premature infants.

Currently, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology advises all pregnant women to take a prenatal vitamin containing antioxidants.

In addition, they advise eating lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, the best sources of antioxidant protection.

For a detailed report with references on the role of glutathione in pregnancy, visit:

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Priya Shah is the Editor of "The Glutathione Report" For regular updates on the health benefits of glutathione subscribe here

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L–Glutathione, The Wonder Antioxidant

By Barrett Niehus

A naturally occurring compound, L–Glutathione (Tathion,) has demonstrated that it is effective in fighting cancer, environmental poisons, and even cataracts. Sound like snake oil? Well, that is what I thought until I started doing research. It turns out that L–Glutathione is one of the most effective antioxidants that our body produces. It works to protect our bodies from the thousands of daily hazards that we are exposed to such as pollution, second hand smoke, alcohol, and food chemicals and poisons. In fact, it is so effective that some researchers believe that it can actually slow down the aging process.

L–Glutathione is an antioxidant that our body produces from three basic amino acids that are found in our food. Our body makes it and uses it, along with the other vitamins that we ingest, as a hard line defense against all of the hazards that cause us to grow sick and old. This is important because research into this specific anti–oxidant has shown that it can actually cure disease, regenerate damaged tissue, minimize the side effects of chemotherapy, and treat cataracts.

It works by acting as a guardian to the toxic compounds that attack our cells. These compounds, typically called free radicals, are extremely aggressive and attack the molecules that make up the cells in our body. These free radicals change the chemical structure of the molecules in our cells and make them ineffective. This in turn either kills the cell, makes it ineffective, or turns it cancerous. L–Glutathione and other antioxidants attack the free radicals and destroy them before they have a chance to attack the cells.

Because it protects our cells by attacking the external poisons, the levels of L–Glutathione in our blood have the potential to significantly impact our overall health. Studies have demonstrated that administration of L–Glutathione is extremely effective in treated diseases such as Hepatitis. It has also been shown to be a key player in the regeneration of the liver, and to combat cirrhosis. The compound is useful in treating jaundice and protects the brain and body tissues in the event of poisoning. In addition, the level of tissue damage from Carbon Monoxide, Hydrogen Sulfide, heavy metals,

Glutathione for a Healthier Pregnancy

pesticides, and environmental poisoning has been demonstrated to be significantly lower with adequate L–Glutathione in the blood stream. Finally, the side effects of chemotherapy and the growth of cataracts have been demonstrated to be significantly reduced with the addition of L–Glutathione.

So what does all of this mean? Essentially, it is time to supplement your diet with L–Glutathione or the proteins that help your body make more of this essential nutrient. Although L–Glutathione is readily made by your body, supplementation with it and its precursors may increase your overall level of protection. Glutathione and its precursors, Cysteine, Glycine and L–Glutamic Acid, are all readily available as food supplements in your local health food store. In addition to eating a healthy and balanced diet, supplementation with Glutathione and its constituents can only help to increase your overall level of health, and may even slow down the process of growing old.

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