

POLICY & PRACTICE

Look for the Folic Acid Seal

Not nearly enough women of childbearing age are consuming the recommended amount of folic acid each day, but the March of Dimes and the Grain Foods Foundation are hoping that a new folic acid seal will help change that. The two organizations teamed up to create a seal that reads "Folic Acid for a Healthy Pregnancy" that will appear on select grain products that have been fortified with folic acid. The seal may also help correct some misconceptions about which foods contain folic acid. For example, a recent survey of

600 women sponsored by the Grain Foods Foundation found that only 12% of women thought enriched white bread had high levels of folic acid, even though it actually has twice as much folic acid as does whole grain or whole wheat bread. The March of Dimes recommends that women of childbearing age consume 400 mcg of folic acid daily before pregnancy and continuing into the early months of pregnancy. "The Folic Acid for a Healthy Pregnancy seal will make it easier for women to choose foods that are healthy for them and their babies," Jennifer L.

Howse, president of the March of Dimes, said in a statement. "Folic acid is the most important vitamin women can take to help prevent serious birth defects of the brain and spine, and it's most important that they start taking it before they get pregnant and continue it after."

Family Planning Funding Gets Boost

Title X family planning programs fared well in the 2008 omnibus budget bill signed by President Bush at the end of last year. Under the legislation, Title X family planning funding increased by \$16.8 million, bringing total funding for the programs to nearly \$300 million. This is the

largest increase in Title X funding since 2000, according to Planned Parenthood Federation of America. In addition, the legislation eliminated new funding for the Community-Based Abstinence Education program. Reproductive health groups praised the two moves as common sense. "The best way to prevent unintended pregnancies and promote healthy families is to invest in family planning programs like Title X, and ensure more women and families have access to reproductive health care and comprehensive sex education programs," Cecile Richards, Planned Parenthood president, said in a statement.

Mandatory HIV Testing in New Jersey

New Jersey recently became the first state in the nation to require universal opt-out HIV testing for pregnant women. Under the new law, which was signed by then-Acting Gov. Richard J. Codey in December, health care providers must test all pregnant women for HIV early in their pregnancies and again during the third trimester unless the patient chooses not to be tested. The law also requires all birthing facilities in the state to test newborns at the time of delivery if the mother's HIV status is either positive or unknown. Previously, women had to opt in for testing. Women will also receive information about HIV, AIDS, and the benefits of being tested.

New York Funds Stem Cell Research

Officials in New York recently awarded the first grants as part of a \$600 million stem cell research program. In this first round, the state announced a total of \$14.5 million in 1-year development grants to support stem cell research and training at 25 institutions. The funding can be used for direct stem cell research, stem cell research equipment and infrastructure, or training of researchers. More grants are expected to be announced later in the year. In the next round, grant awards will focus on encouraging collaboration among scientists in the state, supporting innovative investigator-initiated research, and investigating pluripotent stem cells and other approaches to deriving these stem cells. "These grants will bring New York's entire health care community closer to realizing the vast medical breakthroughs that stem cell research offers," Kenneth E. Raske, president of the Greater New York Hospital Association, said in a statement.

Judge Overturns Maine's Rx Info Law

A federal judge has overturned a Maine law that would have restricted medical data companies' access to physician prescribing information. In a decision that relied heavily on a previous ruling in New Hampshire, U.S. District Judge John Woodcock said that the law would prohibit "the transfer of truthful commercial information" and would violate the free speech guarantee of the First Amendment. The Maine law, intended to address high health care and prescription drug costs, had been challenged on constitutional grounds by IMS Health, Wolters Kluwer Health, and Verispan, all medical data companies that collect, analyze, and sell such data to pharmaceutical manufacturers.

—Mary Ellen Schneider

A LITTLE vs ENOUGH

90% of women don't get adequate calcium from diet alone during their childbearing years¹

Most prenatsals don't fulfill your patients' daily calcium requirements.²⁻⁷

Calcium intake needed during pregnancy	Elemental calcium per daily dosage
1000 - 1300mg	
PreCare® Prenatal	250mg
Natafort® PreNatal	0mg
Citracal® Prenatal	125mg
Centrum® Multivitamins (Advanced Formula)	162mg
One-A-Day® Multivitamins (Maximum)	162mg
Stuart Prenatal®	200mg



Recommended TUMS with every prenatal vitamin prescribed.



Calcium supplementation appears to almost halve the risk of pre-eclampsia...The calcium in TUMS has been shown to help reduce the risk of pre-eclampsia, especially in women with low calcium intakes or in high-risk pregnancy.⁹

Help make the difference between getting a little calcium and getting enough.

References: 1. Calcium Recommendations. Available at: http://www.nationaldairyCouncil.org/nationaldairyCouncil/nutrition/nutrients/calcium_recommendations.pdf. 2. Institute of Medicine. *DRI: Dietary Reference Intake for Calcium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Vitamin D and Fluoride*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press; 1997. 3. PreCare Prenatal product labeling. 4. Natafort Prenatal product labeling. 5. Citracal Prenatal RX product labeling. PreCare is a registered trademark of KV Pharmaceutical Company. 6. Centrum Multivitamins product labeling. 7. One-A-Day multivitamin product labeling. 8. Stuart Prenatal product labeling. 9. Hofmeyr, GJ, Atallah, Duley L. Calcium supplementation during pregnancy for preventing hypertensive disorders and related problems. *The Cochrane Library* 2006; 3. Available at www.thecochranelibrary.com. Stuart Prenatal is a registered trademark of Integrity Pharmaceutical Corporation. NataFort is a registered trademark of Warner Chilcott, PLC. Citracal is a registered trademark of Mission Pharmacal Company. Centrum is a registered trademark of Wyeth Consumer Healthcare. One-A-Day is a registered trademark of Bayer Healthcare LLC. ©2008 GlaxoSmithKline Read and follow label directions.