



**Ottawa Integrative Health Centre Inc.**

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New satellite office inside The Ottawa Birth and Wellness Centre - 2260 Walkley Rd. Ottawa

## Helping You Achieve Health . . . Naturally!

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### **Prenatal Nutrients**

By: Dr Jennifer Keller, ND

Naturopathic Doctor & Birth Doula



Preconception and pregnancy health care are important for a healthy pregnancy journey. With the basics of a well balanced, whole-food based diet and exercise regime in place, our next step is to make sure you have adequate levels of the top researched nutrients for the health of mom and growing baby.

Here are my top recommendations for my patient's health through pregnancy and beyond!

#### **FOLATE**

Folate (folic acid, Vitamin B9) is a vitamin important for DNA synthesis and the growth/protection of cells in our body. Adequate folate levels are important for supporting the neural development

of the baby. It is known to prevent spina bifida, neural tube defects and other birth abnormalities (cleft lip and palate, limb defects, etc.).

**The best food sources of folate include dark leafy green vegetables, whole grains and citrus fruits.**

Supplementation of folate is recommended during the pre-conception and pregnancy period. A good pre-natal vitamin should have the minimum daily requirement of 400 mcg.

#### **OMEGA 3 FATTY ACIDS (EPA AND DHA)**

Omega 3 fatty acids (FAs) are long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids found mainly in cold water fish. They are commonly called Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs) because they are essential to our health and development and cannot be made by the body, therefore must be obtained through our diet or supplementation. The most important omega-3 FAs are EPA and DHA.

Adequate levels of EPA and DHA are vital to the neurological development of the fetus. Studies also show a reduced risk of allergies, asthma, and eczema in the baby with higher consumption of omega-3s by the mother. It also seems that women with higher intake of omega-3 FAs have a decreased risk of pre-term labour, preeclampsia and low birth weight, and even post partum depression.

**You can choose to get your required levels of Omega 3 FAs either through food (fish) or supplementation.**

#### **VITAMIN D**

Vitamin D is another important nutrient for conception and pregnancy. It is estimated that approximately 50% of the Canadian population is deficient in Vitamin D. The best way to find out if you are deficient is to get a blood test with your ND/MD.

Deficiency or not, it is recommended that women who are conceiving and/or pregnant supplement with Vitamin D. Research shows that Vitamin D confers a decreased risk of developing gestational diabetes, pregnancy related high-blood pressure, or preeclampsia. It has also been shown to decrease the risk of premature labour and delivery. When Vitamin D is at adequate levels in the mother, we also see a reduction of risk in the development of type-1 diabetes, allergies, and asthma in baby. The amount of Vitamin D in most prenatal vitamins is often insufficient, requiring extra supplementation. Currently the minimum requirement is suggested at 400 IU per day, preferably in a liquid oil form.

#### **IRON**

Pregnancy increases our need for iron. A deficiency in iron can lead to iron deficiency or iron-deficiency anemia, causing a host of different symptoms, the most notable of which would be extreme fatigue. If you are found to be low in ferritin (the protein that stores iron in our bodies) or anemic, your health care provider will advise you on supplementation to bring your levels up. Avoid cramping and constipation by choosing iron in the form of iron glycinate (or bisglycinate).

Beyond prevention of anemia, we also know that adequate iron is associated with decreased risk of premature birth and low birth weight. Iron deficiency is associated with poor placental development and increased risk of miscarriage.

A good pre-natal supplement should contain a sufficient amount of iron, so additional supplementation is not typically necessary, unless a deficiency is found. Always consult with a health practitioner before supplementation, as too high of iron can also pose health risks.

### **PROBIOTICS**

Research is expanding quickly with how vital probiotics are to our health. Benefits in conception and pregnancy are no exception.

Probiotics are often used to treat many of the digestive complaints that can plague pregnant women, including constipation, diarrhea, heartburn and indigestion. Preventatively, exposure to good probiotics in mom and baby help to stimulate the growth of the immune system and prevent the development of allergies. During pregnancy, mothers who have a healthy gut flora also have decreased risk of being positive for Group-B-Strep.

Probiotics are best obtained from high quality supplements and fermented foods.

The benefits of taking the time to master a healthy regime throughout your pregnancy are vast! Aiming to get the right amounts of these nutrients through diet starts wonderfully healthy habits you can maintain for the rest of your life. If and when supplementation becomes necessary, please consult with a qualified health care provider.

*Are you pregnant?*

***Book an appointment with one of our Naturopathic Doctors to get started!***



### **Pain: Where Does It Come From?**

*By: Tana Shepherd, BSc.,  
Rehabilitative Manual Therapist*

**Pain.** The word pain has the ability to evoke the exact feeling that it represents. Pain has the ability to appear suddenly, stopping us in our tracks, and taking hold of our day-to-day lives. Day in and day out it can be a consistent presence that will not go away.

Pain has the ability to manifest physically, mentally and emotionally, and not always independently of each other. No matter what way it chooses to show itself it is often a sign that should garner our attention. From a therapeutic perspective, **pain can be viewed as our body's way of communicating that something is out of balance.** It is our body's way of telling us that the way we are currently living, thinking or feeling needs to be addressed so that we can move forward. Pain is such a multifaceted state that it affects each of us differently, making it very difficult to locate its cause—let alone put together a treatment plan to alleviate that pain.

This point can be illustrated by a story, one about the very first Osteopath by the name of Doctor Andrew Taylor Still. He was a medical doctor/farmer-turned-

Osteopath who gave a lecture to remember one day while teaching his students in Kirksville, Missouri circa 1895. Dr. Still walked into his old school house carrying his neighbour's cat and addressed his class to talk about pain. After making the cat comfortable by soothing it with strokes and holding it gently, Still suddenly pulled the cat's tail. The animal let out a yelp of pain and leapt from his arms, leaving the students in front of him shocked and bewildered as to the point the old doctor was trying to reach. The lesson was about locating the source of pain. Still explained that even though he had pulled the cat's tail at its rear, the sound it made came from its other end. Similar to this is our physical pain; sometimes where it hurts isn't where the problem is, as seen in the case of this poor feline that probably thought he was in for a morning of admiration rather than provocation.

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(613) 798-1000 or email: [info@oihc.ca](mailto:info@oihc.ca) or visit our website at: [www.oihc.ca](http://www.oihc.ca)*

Osteopathy is a manual therapy that, when translated, means 'suffering of the structure'. Upon first glance we may believe its 'osteo' prefix means that it strictly refers to bone, but actually osteopathic treatment involves treating both bone (hard tissue) and joints as well as soft tissue (muscles, ligaments, connective tissue, etc.). Osteopathic treatment focuses on the entire body by treating and strengthening the musculo-skeletal framework while also treating the impact of the visceral systems on the entire bodily structure. The aim of Osteopathy is to positively affect the body's nervous, circulatory, and lymphatic systems so that it can function better overall.

How does this relate to pain? Part of the osteopathic philosophy is that everything in the body is connected; as a result, pain in one area could be the result of a dysfunction in another area. Let's use a common example: low back pain. Osteopaths will look at the area of discomfort as well as the areas that are associated anatomically and physiologically to the area, such as the hips. Ideally, the low back and hips should work together, but when they don't, it presents a problem.

Often when two parts of the body that should be working together are not, it causes one area to over compensate because its associated area is not working hard enough. Balancing the workload between the hips and back, for example, can help to alleviate low back pain. Osteopaths take this approach to every area of the body during treatment; they look at the entire body from a structural perspective in order to find out how its different parts are working together as a unit. By ensuring that the soft tissue and the hard tissue are balanced and that the structure is functioning optimally, **Osteopathy can help your body work for you instead of against you.**

## Recipe Corner

### **I Scream, You Scream, We all Scream for Healthy Ice Cream??!!**

*By Dr. Christine Nguyen, ND*

#### ***Looking for a healthy way to stay cool this August?***

Dessert and healthy do not necessarily need to be opposites. Since discovering the Yonanas machine 4 years ago, my family and I have had so much fun making all flavours of ice cream with less than 3, often just one, ingredient. And Shhh, don't tell the kids or your guests before serving that it really is a healthy treat that can accommodate all kinds of food intolerances. Dairy allergy? Not a problem. Sugar? None of that here. We have had oohs and ahhs from just the classic one ingredient Yonanas - just frozen bananas!! Yes, it really is that simple. Frozen fruits pushed through a special bladed contraption and poof! Ice cream. Want chocolate? Roll the frozen bananas in pure cocoa just before pushing it through the machine. It really is fast, healthy, delicious and sure to please. I've

made "chocolate", strawberry, mango, blueberries...all of which have been hits at family potlucks and even for the 20+ 4 & 5 years olds in my daughter's kindergarten class! Sprinkle some chia/ flax seeds on top or scoop into a cone as is. "Ice cream" couldn't get any simpler or healthier to make.

*The Yonanas machine can be found at a Canadian Tire, Walmart or housewares store near you. Also makes a great gift for that child or family who seemingly has everything.*

*The author has no affiliation with Yonanas and provides this article as an honest review based on her experiences as a naturopathic doctor, a mother, and a lover of ice cream.*



*Visit their website for dozens of recipes  
and inspiration - <http://yonanas.com>*

*For more information or to make an appointment please call:  
(613) 798-1000 or email: [info@oihc.ca](mailto:info@oihc.ca) or visit our website at: [www.oihc.ca](http://www.oihc.ca)*