

Psychological benefits for kids when mums keep taking folic acid

May 4 2017



Pregnancy test. Credit: public domain

Children's emotional intelligence improved if mums take folic acid supplements throughout pregnancy.

Taking [folic acid supplements](#) throughout pregnancy may improve [psychological development](#) in [children](#).

That is the finding of research by Professor Tony Cassidy and colleagues from Ulster University who will present their study today, Thursday 4 May, to the Annual Conference of the British Psychological Society in Brighton.

Professor Cassidy said: "There is evidence that folic acid supplements taken during the first three months of pregnancy can have beneficial effects on children's brain development. We wanted to investigate whether continued supplementation throughout pregnancy had any additional effects."

The researchers asked the parents of 39 children, now aged seven, to answer questions about their child's personality, including levels of resilience, relationships with others and how they express their emotions. Within this group 22 mothers had taken the supplement throughout their pregnancy while the other 19 took it during the first three months only.

Analysis showed that children whose mothers took the supplement throughout pregnancy demonstrated higher levels of emotional intelligence and resilience. Additionally, the level of folic acid in mother's blood towards the end of pregnancy was a good predictor of children's resilience and [emotional intelligence](#).

Professor Cassidy said: "Most expectant mothers know that taking folic acid supplements in the first three months of pregnancy is important for the baby's spinal development. Our study shows that there are potential psychological benefits for the child if supplements are taken throughout the [pregnancy](#)."

Provided by British Psychological Society

Citation: Psychological benefits for kids when mums keep taking folic acid (2017, May 4) retrieved 2 May 2024 from

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