

baby checkup

does DHA really deliver?

the theory: This essential fatty acid, which occurs naturally in breast milk, is believed to provide both visual and cognitive benefits to infants—especially preemies, who need to catch up with their peers—as they develop. It's been added to many formulas, along with a sister fatty acid, ARA, in recent years.

the evidence: A flurry of new research is proving that “the positive effects of DHA go way beyond the period when babies are actually consuming it,” says Connye Kuratko, Ph.D., a dietitian who researched DHA at Texas Tech University. One study showed that the higher the level of DHA in breast milk, the better newborns per-

form on a neonatal behavior scale at 9 days of age. Another study found that 2-year-olds who received higher levels of DHA as infants could concentrate and stay on task better than their peers. And yet another found that 4-year-olds had higher IQ scores if their moms took DHA supplements during pregnancy and while breastfeeding.

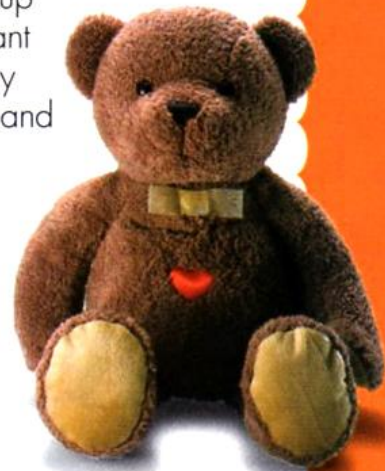
the conclusion: Expectant and breastfeeding moms should take DHA supplements, in the form of a capsule or nutrition bars, along with eating about 12 ounces of low-mercury fish a week (for guidelines, type “mercury” in the search bar on fda.gov). Infants on formula should be fed one that has added DHA and ARA, if possible.



Fact—if it's the right kind, says Jennifer Margolis, M.D., a pediatrician at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine in Ohio. For yogurt to help treat diarrhea, it must have “active cultures,” or “lactobacillus,” a good bacteria that the digestive system uses to absorb food (poor absorption is what causes diarrhea). Yogurt also helps if your baby is on antibiotics, which may cause loose stools.

teddy to the rescue!

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grain of truth

The size of your baby's head at birth is about one-third the size of a normal adult head; by age 2, her noggin will have grown to almost full size.