

Multiple Micronutrient Supplements (MMS) Facts for Service Providers

What are Multiple Micronutrient Supplements (MMS)?

Providing vitamin and mineral supplements during pregnancy can help meet the increased nutrient demands which often cannot be met through diet alone. Micronutrients are vital to healthy development, disease prevention, and wellbeing. Although only required in small amounts, micronutrients are not made by the body and must come from the diet or a supplement. The UNIMMAP¹ MMS formula contains 15 micronutrients to support a healthy pregnancy.

¹ UNIMMAP MMS is formulated to provide the daily Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) of each nutrient.

What are the Benefits of Taking MMS instead of Iron and Folic Acid (IFA)?

MMS contains more micronutrients (15) than IFA, which contains only 2 (iron & folic acid). MMS is demonstrated to improve maternal health and pregnancy outcomes relative to IFA. While both reduce the rate of maternal anemia, evidence shows that MMS provides additional improvements in birth outcomes for women who are undernourished, including anemic and/or underweight, during their pregnancy.

These benefits include reductions in the following:

- Maternal anemia² and other symptoms caused by vitamin and mineral deficiencies
- Low birthweight² (LBW <2500g)³
- Small-for-gestational age² (SGA <10th percentile)³
- Preterm (<37 weeks) births³
- Infant mortality at 6 months³
- Stillbirths³

15 Micronutrients in MMS:

iron (Fe), folic acid, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin D, vitamin E, vitamin B1 (thiamine), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin B3 (niacin), vitamin B6, vitamin B12, zinc (Zn), copper (Cu), iodine (I) & selenium (Se)

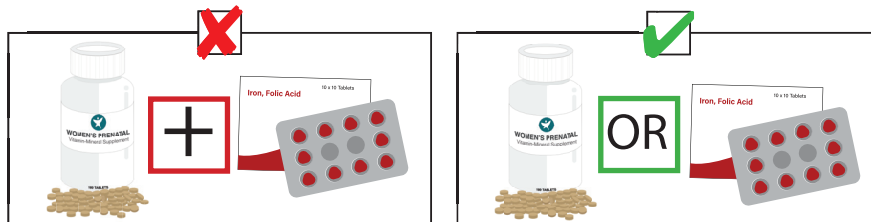
Compared to

2 Micronutrients in IFA:

iron & folic acid

² Keats EC, Haider BA, Tam E, Bhutta ZA. Multiple micronutrient supplementation for women during pregnancy. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2019, Issue 3. Art. No.: CD004905. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD004905.pub6.

³ Smith ER et al. Modifiers of the effect of maternal multiple micronutrient supplementation on stillbirth, birth outcomes, and infant mortality: a meta-analysis of individual patient data from 17 randomised trials in low-income and middle-income countries. *The Lancet Global Health*, 2017, Vol 5, Issue 11, e1090 - e1100.



For prevention purposes, it is not advisable for pregnant women to take *both* MMS and IFA at the same time or on the same day. This may result in a higher iron intake, which may cause side effects such as constipation, vomiting, nausea, and diarrhea.

* In cases of severe anemia in pregnancy (as defined by local health authorities), the causes and treatment should be determined by a healthcare professional.

How often should women take MMS?

Encourage women to take one MMS daily during pregnancy until the bottle is empty (e.g., she can also take while breastfeeding).

Taking MMS with liquids, food and after meals, or at bedtime can reduce side effects. However, if symptoms persist, the pregnant woman should talk with her antenatal care specialist.



Do not give MMS to:

- ✗ Men, children, and women who are not pregnant
- ✗ Pregnant women who are already taking IFAs from their local clinic or outreach services

What are Potential Side Effects of MMS?

When taken as directed, MMS supplements are not expected to cause serious side effects; These side effects are often temporary and will go away as the body adjusts to the medication:

- upset stomach (i.e. nausea, vomiting and diarrhea),
- constipation,
- headaches, or
- an unusual or unpleasant taste in their mouth

Key Messages for Counseling Pregnant Women

- Have the woman repeat the instructions to make sure she understands or ask questions to check her understanding.
- Do not to share MMS with friends or families as they are specially formulated for pregnant women and are important for the growing baby.
- Keep MMS in a safe place, out of reach of children.
- Here are some ideas to help the woman remember to take the MMS daily:
 - ✓ Take MMS at the same time each day, after a meal (this helps build a habit, but is not required for the MMS to work).
 - ✓ Set an alarm or use another reminder to take MMS daily.
 - ✓ Keep the bottle in a location where it is seen every day, but out of reach of children.
 - ✓ Ask family or friends to help give reminders.
- If a woman forgets one day, do not take two MMS the next day; just continue to take one per day as normal.
- Answer any questions and address the concerns a woman has.

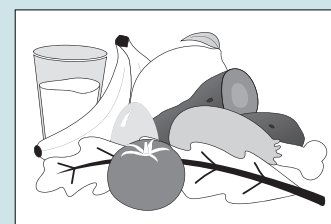


Does MMS use lead to the delivery of “Big Babies” who are Large for their Gestational Age (LGA)?

No. MMS promotes optimal growth and development of the fetus. Women of short stature (stunted and low height for age) should be monitored throughout pregnancy and receive appropriate obstetric care to ensure a healthy delivery.

To ensure a positive, healthy pregnancy experience, advise women to:

- Attend regular antenatal care (ANC) appointments, the WHO recommends a minimum of 6 ANC visits per pregnancy
- Eat a healthy diet with a variety of food from different food groups
- Include physical activity in daily routine
- Monitor weight during pregnancy
- Manage diabetes, including gestational diabetes



Does MMS affect a woman’s fertility?

While women who are trying to conceive can benefit from improved nutrition, MMS is **not** a fertility drug. Advise women to consult a doctor for advice on fertility.

MMS is also **not** a birth control pill and **cannot** be used for family planning.



How do I give MMS to women who are pregnant?

- Give each pregnant woman a bottle containing 180 MMS to use during her pregnancy. For safety reasons and to keep the MMS from degrading, keep the supplements in the original bottle.
- Inform women about safe storage, dosage, side effects, and warnings, and show them how to open the child-resistant cap.

How Should MMS be Stored?

- Store the MMS bottle in a cool, dry place, between 15° C and 30° C.
- Keep the bottle tightly closed and out of reach of children.

How do you Open Child Resistant Bottle Caps?

