

# HOW TO COUNSEL PREGNANT CLIENTS ON TAKING PRENATAL MULTIVITAMINS

**Empower your pregnant clients to take a simple step towards a healthier pregnancy by taking a daily prenatal multivitamin.**

Vitamin Angels prenatal multivitamins are intended to be distributed to pregnant clients experiencing barriers to accessing prenatal multivitamins. Each bottle contains 180 capsules, which is a 6-month supply. We ask that you provide 1 bottle per pregnant client in need, and we encourage you to walk through the following points with each pregnant client upon distribution.



## Key Counseling Points:

- Explain what a prenatal multivitamin is and what it provides
- Explain the importance of taking a daily prenatal multivitamin
- Discuss potential side effects and how to resolve them
- Provide support and discuss a plan for daily adherence
- Highlight instructions provided on the bottle
- Share storage best practices
- Demonstrate how to open child-resistant caps

## Explain what a prenatal multivitamin is and what it provides

Prenatal multivitamins, also known as “prenatal vitamin-mineral supplements”, are a daily supplement of 15 essential vitamins and minerals, including iron.

## Explain the importance of taking a daily prenatal multivitamin

There is an increased need for vitamins and minerals during pregnancy, and providing supplemental nutrition in the form of a daily multivitamin is an excellent way to meet this increased need. The earlier your pregnant clients begin taking a multivitamin and the higher the adherence to taking 1 multivitamin each day, the greater the impact the vitamins and minerals may have on their health and the health of their child.

Prenatal multivitamins can help pregnant clients:

- Meet all of their vitamin and mineral needs during pregnancy.
- Reduce anemia, a condition caused by low iron intake.
- Decrease birth defects and babies born too small.
- Support their baby's healthy immune system.
- Create a foundation for their baby to grow and develop into a healthy child.

## Discuss possible side effects of multivitamins and how to resolve them

When taken as directed, multivitamins are not expected to cause serious side effects; however, some people experience upset stomach, constipation, headaches, or an unusual or unpleasant taste in their mouth after taking the multivitamins. Many of these side effects are temporary and will go away as the body adjusts to the multivitamin. Take multivitamins with water, snacks or at bedtime to reduce side effects.

## Provide support and discuss a plan for daily adherence

Talk through strategies that will empower your pregnant client to take a prenatal multivitamin every day. Ensuring that this is a collaborative discussion will help make sustainable and lasting changes that can support both the client and their developing baby.

Strategies for daily adherence others have found helpful include:

- Using a tracker or a tracking app to mark off doses taken.
- Taking their prenatal multivitamin at the same time each day by taking it with the same meal. Taking the prenatal multivitamin with food has the added benefit of reducing potential side effects.
- Storing the bottle in a spot commonly accessed, like by their keys. Be sure this remains out of reach of children!

**Be sure to always ask for your client's input as you work together to build a plan that will work best for them.**

## Highlight the instructions on the multivitamin bottle

Taking a multivitamin capsule



Take **1** every day.



It may help to **take the multivitamin with food**.



**Drinking liquids** may help swallow the multivitamin



Multivitamins should be taken everyday, but only one once a day.

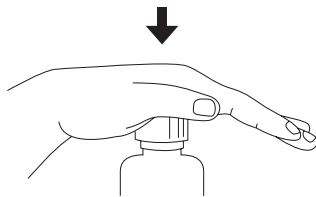
## Share storage best practices

To ensure the prenatal multivitamins remain fresh and provide the proper amounts of critical vitamins and minerals, encourage your client to store the bottle in a **cool, dry location** (ideally between **59-89°F**) and emphasize the importance of **keeping the cap tightly closed** when not in use.

## Demonstrate how to open child-resistant caps

Before allowing pregnant clients to take bottles of multivitamins home, ensure that they are able to open the child resistant cap.

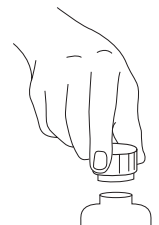
### Screw Top Bottle:



Use palm of hand to press firmly down on cap.



Turn cap in the direction indicated by the arrows (counter-clockwise).



Remove cap.



**DO NOT EAT:** The little packet inside the bottle contains silica gel; although it is non-toxic and not harmful if swallowed (it is basically sand), it should not be eaten. The packet should remain in the bottle/container as it helps to absorb moisture (water) and maintains the quality of the vitamins and minerals. However, caution should be taken to keep the packet out of the reach of small children, because the silica gel packet may be a choking hazard.



**WARNING:** Accidental overdose of iron-containing products is a leading cause of fatal poisoning in children under 6. **KEEP THIS PRODUCT OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN.** In case of accidental overdose, call a doctor or poison control center immediately.