

# Innate Choice Healthy News - Volume 3 - The Role of Omega-3's in Maternal Health and Breastfeeding

This month's topic focuses on the wonderful process of creating a new life – pregnancy. While it can be a time of major physical and emotional changes, every healthy parent would agree that it is one of the most rewarding experiences in life. It is our goal to assist every mother in creating the ideal environment for her developing child. One of the most important and overlooked nutrients in this process is Omega-3 fish oil. The main reason we encourage everyone to become sufficient in this essential nutrient is for overall health and wellness, but pregnancy underscores the absolute necessity of this key nutrient. Once a woman is pregnant it is more difficult to become sufficient and if the mother is DEFICIENT, both her health and the health of her baby are SEVERELY COMPROMISED.

Deficiencies in omega-3 fish oil have been linked to post-partum depression. A recent study estimated that depression affects anywhere from 10-20% of all women after giving birth, and up to 50% in some high-risk populations (Kendall-Tackett, *Int Breastfeeding J*, May 2007). Low levels of omega-3's are also associated with poor cognitive performance on tests of delayed memory, logical memory and ability to draw designs from memory (Muldoon, *Am Psychosom. Soc., Ann. Mtg.*, Mar 2007, abstract). This is more commonly referred to as “mommy brain”. Finally, insufficient amounts of omega-3's make the mother susceptible to auto-immune and inflammatory conditions such as lupus, fibromyalgia and multiple sclerosis as well as to hormonal imbalances and fatigue.

For the developing baby, sufficient amounts of omega-3's are necessary for brain and nerve development. This is crucial for brain development, behavior, and even sleep. A study in Connecticut confirmed these findings in babies of mothers with high levels of omega-3. These babies had more quiet sleep and less sleep-wake transitions which the researchers interpreted to mean a more mature central nervous system (Cheruku, *Am J Clin Nutr*, Sep 2002). Insufficient omega-3 intake can also adversely affect the infant's vision (McCann, *Am J Clin Nutr*, Aug 2005) and has been linked to attention deficit behavior and hyperactivity (Stevens, *Am J Clin Nutr*, Oct 1995).

The Innate Diet™ is proven again - doing what supports the natural balance of the body works every time! Wellness is the only solution! When you are sufficient in what your body needs and avoid those things that are toxic, you will naturally gravitate towards health and away from illness. Getting and staying healthy is that simple!