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Recommendations on dietary fat intake in pregnancy

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Dietary fat intake in pregnancy and lactation affects pregnancy outcomes, and child growth, development and long-term health. The European Commission charged the EU research project PERILIP, jointly with the EU Early Nutrition Programming Project, to develop recommendations on dietary fat intake in pregnancy and lactation. This was approached by reviewing available evidence and by a consensus conference attended by some 50 experts including representatives of 10 international scientific associations. The adopted conclusions include: Dietary fat intake in pregnancy and lactation (E%) should be as recommended for the general population. Pregnant and lactating women should aim to achieve a dietary intake at least 200 mg DHA/day. Intakes of up to 1 g/day of DHA or 2.7 g/day of n-3 LCPUFA were used in RCTs without significant adverse effects. Women of childbearing age should consume 1-2 two portions of fish per week, including fatty fish. Intake of the precursor, alpha-linolenic acid, is far less effective with respect to DHA deposition in fetal brain than the intake of preformed DHA. Intake of fish / n-3 LCPUFA results in a slightly longer pregnancy duration. Dietary inadequacies should be screened for during pregnancy, and individual counselling be offered if needed.