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There is no high quality evidence that **antioxidant supplements** help to **increase** a **woman's chances** of having a **baby**, according to the results of a new systematic review. The review, published in *The Cochrane Library*, found women were no more likely to conceive when taking oral antioxidants and that there was limited information about potential harms.

Around a quarter of couples planning a baby are thought to have difficulty conceiving.

Women undergoing fertility treatment often take dietary supplements, including antioxidants, to try to increase their chances of becoming pregnant. However, many antioxidant supplements taken to improve fertility are unregulated and there is limited evidence on their safety and effects.

The researchers analysed data from 28 trials involving a total of 3,548 women attending fertility clinics. Antioxidants did not increase the women's chances of conceiving or having a baby. The results show no significant increase in women becoming

pregnant when taking antioxidants compared to those taking placebos or being given standard treatment, including folic acid.

"There is no evidence in this review that suggests

taking an antioxidant is beneficial for women who are trying to conceive," said lead researcher, Marian Showell, who works in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Auckland in

Auckland, New Zealand.

Only 14 of the trials reported on adverse effects such as

miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy. Women taking antioxidants experienced no more adverse effects compared

to those who received placebos or standard treatment.

Overall, the

researchers considered the quality of the trials to be low or very low and the number of different

antioxidants tested made it difficult to make comparisons. "We could not assess whether one antioxidant

was better than another," said Showell.