

effort to put the adolescent at ease and avoid undue pressure. Conveying a nonjudgmental and genuine caring acceptance of the adolescent and her goals will assist the nurse in gaining the adolescent's confidence and trust.

Communication takes time and patience. Asking open-ended questions and listening for cues will help identify physical, emotional, social, and cultural influences that might affect the adolescent's progress through the maternity cycle.

The adolescent needs to know what is happening to her, what is expected of her, and how she can help in developing a care plan. Adolescents have their own ideas about the type of help and support they need. Nurses should consult with them and provide them an opportunity to share their ideas.

### **Nursing Alert**

All pregnant women should take a vitamin and mineral supplement to ensure the recommended dietary allowance for folic acid (0.4 mg [400 mcg] daily) to help prevent neural tube defects (see [Meningomyelocele Prevention, Chapter 30](#)). Initiation before pregnancy has been shown to have the most benefit. Consider a multivitamin for all sexually active women.

## **Contraception**

Family planning services have developed and expanded during recent years, but the need for contraceptive services as part of the health care of adolescents remains great. The birth control pill and condom remain the most popular methods for adolescents; 3-month injectable contraception is more popular among lower-income adolescents. Adolescents commonly delay seeking contraceptive information. The typical interval from onset of sexual intercourse until the first visit for contraception is 1 year. A pregnancy scare is usually the precipitating event for the contraception appointment. Counseling about contraceptive options should be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the cognitive level of the adolescent. The adolescent should be given accurate information about the risks and benefits of each method before making a choice.

Many teenagers feel ambivalent regarding their sexual activity and avoid many contraceptives because their use seems too