

# FOLIC ACID



Prenatal care is an important part of pregnancy, and part of that care is folic acid intake. Folic acid is a form of folate (vitamin B9) that everyone needs to be healthy, but it is extremely important for pregnant women.

## WHY DO YOU NEED FOLIC ACID?

Folic acid helps prevent birth defects such as severe brain defects (anencephaly) and spinal defects (spina bifida) in unborn babies. These birth defects can develop during the first few weeks of pregnancy, often before a woman knows she is pregnant. Folic acid can also help prevent early pregnancy loss (miscarriage).

## WHEN SHOULD YOU START TAKING FOLIC ACID?

Every woman of childbearing age needs to take folic acid every day, whether she is planning to become pregnant or not. In pregnant women it is important because it helps both the baby and the mother to produce new cells. If the pregnant woman is not taking folic acid, she should talk to her gynecologist to start taking it.

## HOW CAN YOU GET FOLIC ACID?

You can find folic acid in several ways:

- 1. Vitamin:** Most multivitamins contain folic acid. Check with your gynecologist before taking any vitamin.
- 2. Food:** naturally through certain foods you eat such as:
  - Dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach and lettuce.
  - Orange and its juice
  - Nuts and dried fruits
  - Beans
  - Poultry (chicken, turkey) and meat
  - Whole grains

- "Fortified" foods such as breakfast cereals, breads, pasta, cornmeal, white rice, among others.

Check the Nutrition Facts label and look for products that have "100%" next to the word "folate" or "enriched" in the ingredient list to see if the food has added folic acid.

## HOW MUCH FOLIC ACID DO YOU NEED DURING PREGNANCY?

During pregnancy, the recommended daily amount is 400 to 800 mcg. Consult your gynecologist about how much folic acid you need:

<b>Vitamin or mineral</b>	Folic Acid
<b>Importance in pregnancy</b>	Prevents the baby from being born with neural tube defects and aids in the development of the baby's neurological system.
<b>Recommended daily intake</b>	400 to 800 mcg/day
<b>Sources</b>	1/2 cup pink beans = 486 mcg 1/2 cup spinach = 131 mcg 1/2 cup white rice = 90 mcg 1 medium orange = 39 mcg
<b>Additional Comments</b>	High temperatures (when cooking) can affect this vitamin. It is better to consume fresh foods.



For more information, please call the Clinical Management Unit at **787-706-2552** or [commercialclinicalmanagement@ssspr.com](mailto:commercialclinicalmanagement@ssspr.com).



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