

The Role of Folic Acid in a Healthy Pregnancy

Folic acid is a vitamin. Also known as folate, it is a B vitamin that is found in many common foods. You can also get folic acid from taking vitamin pills.

Getting enough folic acid in your diet helps protect your baby from certain birth defects.

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Folic Acid Is Healthy for You Too

Folic acid is a vitamin with many benefits for the mother as well as her baby. Getting enough folic acid can help prevent heart disease and Alzheimer's disease.

Six Benefits of Folic Acid for Your Baby

- 1. Protection from spina bifida:** A disease that affects your baby's spine. It will also affect your baby's ability to learn.
- 2. Protection from anencephalus:** A disease that affects your baby's brain. The baby's brain will not form, causing your baby to die before birth or shortly after.
- 3. Protection from cleft lip and palate:** This is when your baby's mouth does not form properly.
- 4. Protection from heart problems:** There is some evidence that folic acid helps prevent heart disease in adults as well as babies.
- 5. Prevents anemia:** A condition where your baby is weakened because their blood lacks iron.
- 6. Prevents low birth weight:** Helps maintain a healthy weight for your baby during pregnancy and at birth.

Your Health Is Important

Take care of your health. Do it for yourself and for your family.

For more information on folic acid call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at:

1-888-232-6789

Or visit their Web site at:

www.cdc.gov

Folic Acid

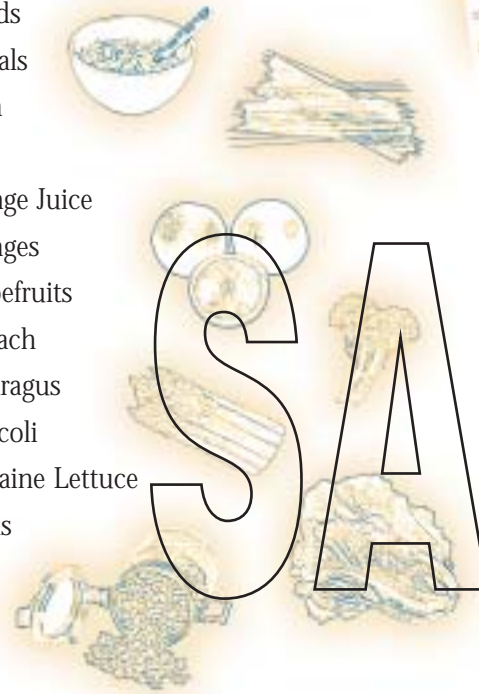
learn how it helps your baby's health



Twelve Common Foods With Folic Acid

Researchers say you should take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day. Taking a vitamin every day can give you all the folic acid you need. Here are some common foods that are also rich in folic acid:

- Breads
- Cereals
- Pasta
- Rice
- Orange Juice
- Oranges
- Grapefruits
- Spinach
- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Romaine Lettuce
- Beans



Nutrition Facts					
Serving Size 1/4 cup (20g)					
Servings Per Container 15					
Amount Per Serving					
Calories	60	100			
Calories from Fat	10	10			
% Daily Value*					
Total Fat 1g				2%	4%
Vitamin A				10%	10%
Vitamin C				10%	25%
Calcium				25%	25%
Iron				0%	10%
Vitamin D				25%	30%
Thiamin				25%	35%
Riboflavin				25%	25%
Niacin				25%	25%
Vitamin B6				25%	25%
Folic Acid				25%	35%
Vitamin B12				15%	30%

Check the Food Labels for Folic Acid

Folic acid is added into breads, cereals, and other grain products.

Check the labels on the food package, it will say if it contains 100 percent of the folic acid you need daily. Vitamin bottles will also have labels that will tell you if they contain 100 percent of the folic acid you need each day.

You cannot take too much folic acid. Your body gets rid of it every day. Make sure you are getting enough.

Beware of Multivitamins

Do not take more than one multivitamin a day to get the folic acid you need. You will be giving your baby other vitamins that will be bad for them if they have too much.

Take your multivitamin, and then eat foods that have folic acid, or you can get a folic acid vitamin at your drug store. You can also ask your doctor to prescribe a pill that will give you the folic acid your baby needs.

Start Taking Folic Acid Before You Become Pregnant

Doctors recommend that you start taking folic acid at least one month before getting pregnant. You should continue taking folic acid every day during your pregnancy. This is the best way to prevent birth defects.

Even if you are not planning a pregnancy, make sure you get enough folic acid in your diet. Over half of all pregnancies are not planned.

The Four F's of Folic Acid

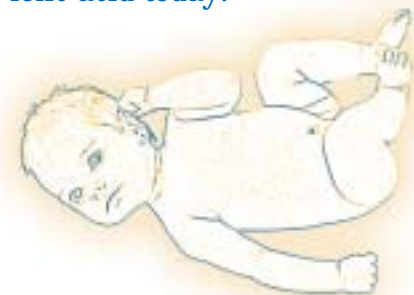
Folic acid protects your baby against birth defects. Begin taking folic acid at least one month before pregnancy, and continue the whole time you are pregnant.

Four hundred micrograms is the recommended daily amount of folic acid. You cannot take too much folic acid.

Foods that are rich in folic acid include, breads, cereals, and pasta. Check the labels on the packaging to see how much they have.

Feel better about your baby's health by getting enough folic acid, and feel better about your own health as well.

Protect your baby. Start taking folic acid today!



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