

Folic Acid
(Folate)

The use of folic acid reduces the risk of neural tube birth defects (spina bifida) when taken for at least one month before conceiving and in the early weeks of pregnancy.

For this reason, we encourage women who are planning a pregnancy or who are capable of becoming pregnant to supplement their diet with 0.4 milligrams (400 mcgs) of folic acid per day. This is the amount contained in most multivitamins. Consuming a diet high in folic acid is also important.

Good natural sources of folic acid include orange juice, green leafy vegetables, beans, peas and liver. Some breakfast cereals are fortified with folic acid, and all “enriched” grain products include folic acid.

The surest way to get the recommended amount of folic acid is to eat a healthy diet and take a multivitamin supplement every day.

If you have any personal history of neural tube defect, or if you have an intestinal disease that interferes with nutrient absorption, consult with a health care provider for special folic acid dosing.