

Facts about Folic Acid



The Basics

What: Folic Acid is a vitamin that our body uses to create new cells. Everyone needs folic acid but it is especially important for your developing baby.

Why: Folic acid plays a key role in the development of your baby's spine and brain. This vitamin is needed to create new cells in your growing baby and allows for the closure of the neural tube. A lack of folic acid can lead to neural tube defects such as spina bifida and anencephaly.

"The American Academy of Pediatrics endorses the US Public Health Service (USPHS) recommendation that all women capable of becoming pregnant consume 400 µg of folic acid daily to prevent neural tube defects (NTDs). Studies have demonstrated that periconceptional folic acid supplementation can prevent 50% or more of NTDs such as spina bifida and anencephaly."

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Visit these helpful websites:



Illinois Department of Public Health:

<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/data-statistics/epidemiology/apors>

National Council on Folic Acid:

<http://folicacidinfo.org>

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies:

www.hmhb.org/

March of Dimes:

www.marchofdimes.org/

National Birth Defects Prevention Network: www.nbdpn.org

Spina Bifida Association:

www.spinabifidaassociation.org

And visit your doctor for more information.

When: Neural tube development begins around the 3rd or 4th week of pregnancy, when most women are not even aware they are pregnant! Because of this a women of childbearing years should consume about 400 micrograms of folic acid every day.

How: Getting enough folic acid is easy! There are several over the counter multivitamins or pills from your doctor that contain the recommended amount of folic acid. You can also get enough folic acid from a daily bowl of Multigrain Cheerios™, Wheat Chex™ or Special K™.