

Folate (also called Folic Acid)

Good for women - for so many reasons!

Folate is a water soluble vitamin that can not be “stored-up” in your body; therefore an adequate daily intake is very important - for several reasons!

- **Folate helps prevent certain serious birth defects.** The types of birth defects that folate prevents (neural tube defects such as spina bifida and anencephaly) occur very early in pregnancy when some women may not even know they are pregnant! These defects **can not** be prevented by supplements taken later in pregnancy. Folate may also play a role in preventing other birth defects such as cleft lip and palate.
- **Folate helps prevent anemia.** Folate acts together with vitamin B 12 in the production of hemoglobin (the substance in our blood that carries oxygen to all our body cells).
- **Folate may help reduce the risk of *cervical cancer* and colon cancer.**
- **Folate helps reduce the build-up of homocysteine, a substance associated with increased risk of heart disease and stroke.**

Important Note: In recent years, many grain products (breads, pasta, rice, cereals) have been enriched with additional folate. The current popularity of low carbohydrate diets may put some women at increased risk for folate deficiency as well as for a number of other nutrition related problems. *Women on low carb diets should be sure to take a daily multivitamin supplement.*



The U.S. Public Health Service recommends that *all* women capable of becoming pregnant (and anyone else whose daily intake may be inadequate) get 400 micrograms (0.4 mg.) of folate a day from food & /or supplements. ***Getting enough folate is not difficult!*** The name folate (like foliage) is a clue that the best food sources are plant-based such as leafy greens, beans, whole grain products, broccoli, asparagus, citrus fruits. Be sure to check the label on your breakfast cereal; a few have 100% of the folate you need (Total, Product 19, Smart Start and others). Also, most multivitamin brands (One-A-Day, Centrum, etc) contain a full day's supply of folate!

Good Dietary Sources of Folate:

- 1 cup refried beans = 200
- 1 cup asparagus = 180 mcg
- 1 pkt. instant oatmeal = 150 mcg.
- 1 cup breakfast cereal (depends on type/read the label) = 150 to 400 mcg.
- 1 cup raw spinach = 110 mcg.
- 1 cup lima beans = 110
- 1 cup of orange juice = 100 mcg.
- 1 cup fresh cooked broccoli = 100 mcg.
- ½ cup peanuts = 80 mcg.
- 1 cup romaine lettuce = 75 mcg.
- 1 slice medium cheese pizza = 60 mcg.
- 1 cup baked beans = 60 mcg.
- 1/2 cup fortified pasta = 50 mcg.
- 1 slice fortified bread = 40 mcg.

***Is your daily folate intake adequate?
If not, take steps today to improve it—
because it's never too late to make positive change!***