

How can I make folic acid part of my daily routine?

To help you to remember your folic acid, get into the habit of taking folic acid when you do another daily activity. For example, when you:

- brush your teeth
- feed the dog
- drink your coffee
- listen to the news
- eat lunch

This way your other daily activity will remind you to take your folic acid. It doesn't matter when you take folic acid, at a mealtime or before your favorite TV show. Make a habit of getting enough folic acid every day!



For more information

Spina Bifida Association of America

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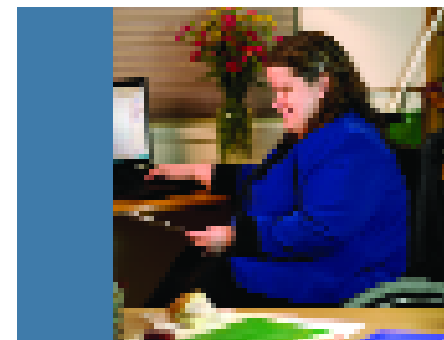
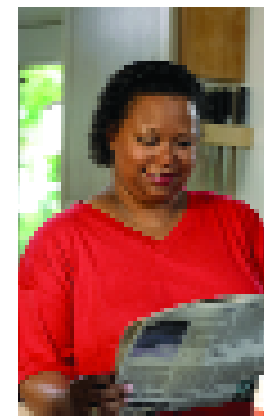
Website: www.sbaa.org



The mission of the Spina Bifida Association of America is to promote the prevention of spina bifida and to enhance the lives of all affected.

Combined Federal Campaign #0584

Folic Acid Every Day



Folic acid helps you build healthy cells.

You need it every day.

What is folic acid?

Folic acid helps you build healthy cells. Folic acid is a “water-soluble” B-vitamin. This means folic acid does not stay in your body for very long, so you need to take it every day. Taking folic acid is something you need to do every day, just like you read the newspaper, get bread in the morning, eat lunch, or relax in the evening.

What does folic acid do?

Folic acid helps your body build healthy cells. It's important to get in the habit of taking a vitamin with folic acid every day so that your body has enough when you need it.

Folic acid is most important when your body is building lots of new cells, like before and during pregnancy. Folic acid reduces the risk of serious birth defects like spina bifida. Spina bifida is a birth defect that happens when a baby's spine does not close all the way. Some birth defects happen very early in pregnancy, even before a woman knows that she is pregnant. That's why it's important to get enough folic acid every day. Taking folic acid before and during early pregnancy reduces the risk of spina bifida and other serious birth defects up to 70%.

There are other reasons for everyone to get enough folic acid every day. Folic acid might also improve heart health and help prevent some cancers.



Who needs folic acid?

Everyone! Just about everyone needs to take a vitamin with folic acid every day. Folic acid is an important vitamin that is recommended for all men and women.

Folic acid is most important for any woman who could possibly become pregnant. Even if you are not planning to become pregnant, your body needs folic acid every day. Most people don't plan a pregnancy, so it's important to get in the habit of taking folic acid so that your body has it when you need it.

Where can I get folic acid?

It's important to take a vitamin with folic acid every day so you can be sure you are getting the folic acid that you need. You can find folic acid in your local grocery, pharmacy, or discount store.

Good sources of folic acid include:

- Vitamins that have folic acid:
 - Multivitamins- Most sold in the United States have all the folic acid you need for the day.
 - Folic acid pills- These are smaller vitamin pills that contain only a daily dose of folic acid.
- Breakfast cereals also have folic acid added to them.
 - Some cereals have 100% of the folic acid you need for the day. On a nutrition label, this is called the Daily Value. You need to make sure the cereal has all the folic acid you need. Look for “100%” next to folic acid on the nutrition label.

Even people who eat healthy every day may not get enough folic acid. It's hard to get enough folic acid by just eating healthy. That's why it's important to take a vitamin that has folic acid every day.

How much folic acid do I need?

All women who could become pregnant should take a vitamin with 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day. This is 100% of what you need each day. On a nutrition label, this is called the Daily Value. Make sure it says 100% next to folic acid. You can find this amount in:

- (1) Multivitamin or
- (1) Folic acid pill.

Some breakfast cereals also have all the folic acid you need. To be sure that your vitamin or cereal has enough folic acid, check the nutrition label. It should say “100%” next to folic acid.

Some women may be at increased risk for having a pregnancy affected by a birth defect like spina bifida. Please see your health care provider. If you are at an increased risk, your doctor should give you a prescription for a higher amount of folic acid.

