

Folic Acid

Folic acid (or folate in its natural form) is one of the B group vitamins. Everyone needs folic acid, but it is especially important for women who are planning a baby.

To reduce the risk of your baby being born with spina bifida or other neural tube defects, ensure you have enough folic acid in your

Important

If you have already had a baby affected by neural tube defects, consult your doctor to obtain a prescription for extra folic acid before you get pregnant

How much do I need?

A healthy adult needs 200µmg (micrograms) of folic acid per day. Most people should be able to get this amount by eating a varied and balanced diet.

- Women planning a baby or up to 12 week's pregnant need 600µg per day.
- Take a 400µg folic acid supplement, one month before getting pregnant and for 12 weeks once you are pregnant.

Sources of folate

Folate is found in small amounts in many foods. Good sources include:

- Breakfast cereals with added folic acid, eg Weetabix
- Wholegrain or brown bread, pasta or brown rice. Some bread has added folic acid – check the label.
- Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day, include:-

Spinach, peas, asparagus, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower and peas. Citrus fruits and fruit juices eg oranges, grapefruit, kiwi fruit.

- Tinned baked beans.
- Chick peas.
- Marmite.

Remember:-

Folic acid is destroyed by heat and water. Steam or microwave vegetables.
Do not keep food hot for a long time

Meal and Snack Ideas

Breakfast

2 Weetabix and milk
Wholemeal toast and Marmite
Orange juice

Main Meal

Meat or fish
Potatoes or brown pasta or brown rice
Broccoli, peas
Fruit

Snack Meal

Granary bread sandwich
Salad
Fruit

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