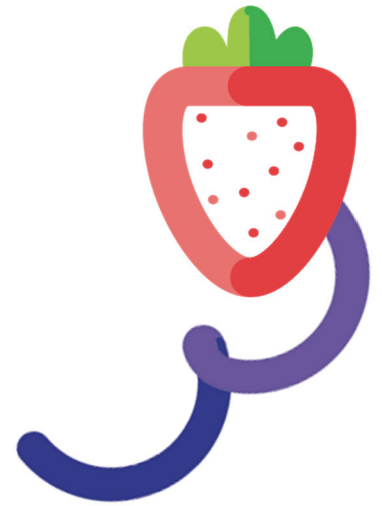




# EVERY WOMAN NEEDS FOLIC ACID



## WHAT IS FOLIC ACID?

Folic acid is a vitamin that is often lacking in women's diets. Folic acid is also known as folate or vitamin B9.

## WHY DO I NEED FOLIC ACID?

Folic acid helps prevent birth defects such as neural tube defects (*NTDs*: birth defects of the brain and spinal cord). It is especially important to take folic acid during the first month of pregnancy for the development of a baby's brain and spine. Folic acid can also help prevent some cancers and heart disease.

## HOW MUCH FOLIC ACID DO I NEED?

- Non-pregnant women need 400 micrograms (*mcg*) of folic acid per day.
- Pregnant women need 600 mcg per day.
- Lactating women need 500 mcg per day.
- People who have had an *NTD*-affected pregnancy should consult their healthcare provider to see how much folic acid they need.

## WHERE DO I FIND FOLIC ACID?

There are two ways to get this much folic acid in your diet:

1. As a vitamin—most multivitamins contain 400 micrograms or 100% of the daily value. Check the label.
2. Through the foods you eat—folic acid is found naturally in some foods and in fortified (enriched) foods.

All enriched grain foods have folic acid added to them: breads, rice, macaroni, noodles, cereal, cornmeal, and corn masa flour. The foods listed below are rich in folic acid. Try to eat at least five servings per day. Tip: Cook vegetables just until done will also keep folic acid content high.

- Asparagus
- Bananas
- Black beans
- Black eyed peas
- Broccoli
- Cantaloupe
- Cauliflower
- Chick peas
- Collard greens
- Eggs
- Green peas
- Honeydew melon
- Kiwi fruit
- Lentils
- Lima beans
- Mustard greens
- Nuts
- Oranges
- Orange juice
- Pineapple juice
- Romaine lettuce
- Spinach
- Strawberries
- Tomato juice
- Turnip greens



Folic acid may also be called folate or folacin on food labels. If the daily value is 20% or higher, the food is a high source of folic acid.

### WHAT IF I AM NOT PLANNING TO HAVE A BABY?

About half of pregnancies are not planned. That's why you need folic acid every day if there's a chance you could get pregnant. By the time you know you're pregnant, your baby's brain and spine are already formed.

My plan for getting enough folic acid:

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