

# Everyone Needs Folic Acid Everyday



Folic acid is a B vitamin that everyone needs for good health. Taking folic acid may lower a woman's chance of having a baby with certain birth defects of the brain or spine. These birth defects are called neural tube defects. They can happen in the first weeks of pregnancy. That's why you need folic acid in your body **before** you get pregnant.



Folic acid may also lower your chance of heart disease, colon cancer, and cervical cancer.

## How Much Folic Acid Do I Need?

Most of us get some folic acid in our diet every day, but not every one gets enough. All women and men age 14 and older should make sure they get enough folic acid by:

- Taking a multi-vitamin pill that has 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day.

OR

- Eating a serving of breakfast cereal that has 400 mcg of folic acid every day.

Along with taking 400 mcg of folic acid every day, eat a healthy diet that includes foods with folic acid. A healthy diet includes 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

## What Are Good Sources of Folic Acid?

- Multi-vitamins with folic acid
- Breakfast cereals that say "fortified" on the box
- Rice and grits
- Pasta, tortillas, and bread products that say "enriched" or "fortified" on the label
- Beans, lentils and black-eyed peas
- Dark green leafy vegetables like spinach
- Orange juice
- Broccoli, asparagus, green peas and okra
- Soybeans and tofu
- Papaya
- Avocados
- Peanut butter



For more information: [www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)  
Funded by the USDA, California Nutrition Network

