



### Sources of folic acid

Folic acid may be found in almost every over-the-counter multivitamin and prenatal vitamins.

Eat foods that are rich in folic acid (B vitamin) as part of a healthy diet. Try broccoli, spinach and orange juice as well as food fortified with folic acid, such as enriched bread, cereal and pasta.

#### Excellent Sources (0.055 mg or more)

Chickpeas, lentils	3/4 cup (175 ml)
Cooked asparagus	1/2 cup (125 ml)
Cooked spinach	1/2 cup (125 ml)
Orange juice, frozen	1/2 cup (125 ml)
Enriched pasta	1/2 cup (125 ml)
Broccoli, brussel sprouts, beets (cooked)	1/2 cup (125 ml)

#### Good Sources (0.033 mg or more)

Eggs, raw or cooked in shell	2 large
Corn	1/2 cup (125 ml)
Orange	1 medium

For more sources of folic acid in food, including a fun way to measure the folic acid in your daily food intake, visit [www.folicacid.ca](http://www.folicacid.ca)



Get all the facts about folic acid!

[www.folicacid.ca](http://www.folicacid.ca)



For additional information about neural tube defects like spina bifida:

### Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario

555 Richmond Street West  
P.O. Box 103, Suite 1006  
Toronto, Ontario M5V 3B1

Phone: 416-214-1056 or 800-387-1575 (Ontario)

Fax: 416-214-1446

[provincial@sbhao.on.ca](mailto:provincial@sbhao.on.ca)

[www.sbhao.on.ca](http://www.sbhao.on.ca)

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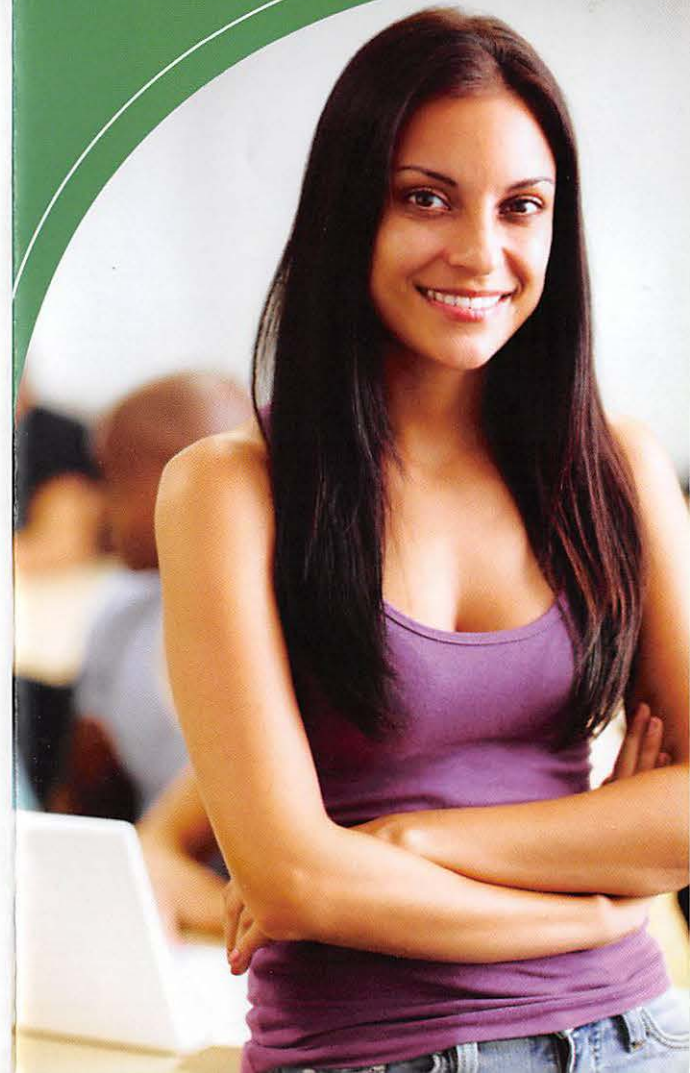
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**What all women should know!**

**Folic Acid**  
It's never too early





# Folic Acid

## Essential to healthy living for all women

Many women understand the importance of making healthy living part of their daily routine. They eat well, exercise and get enough sleep every day. Is it enough?

For all women who can become pregnant, taking folic acid is important to help reduce the risk of serious birth defects – take a multivitamin containing at least 0.4 mg of folic acid every day.

Half of all pregnancies are unplanned; so take folic acid now, even if you are not planning to get pregnant.

While 80% of women know about folic acid, only 38% understand that it must be taken before conception.

**Make this a daily habit – just like brushing your teeth.**

### Why take folic acid?

It can reduce the risk of neural tube defects (NTDs), such as spina bifida and anencephaly by as much as 70%. NTDs happen in the first four weeks after conception, even before most women know that they are even pregnant.

### Know the facts

- Folic acid, a B vitamin, is also known as folate when found in food
- Folic acid is essential for the development of a baby's spine, brain and skull in the early weeks of pregnancy
- NTDs are complex, incurable neurological conditions
- In Canada about 1 in 1300 pregnancies is affected by an NTD.

Some say 'an apple a day'. We say a multivitamin with 0.4mg of folic acid a day...



...Find out why at [folicacid.ca](http://folicacid.ca)

### How do you get enough folic acid?

Take a multivitamin containing at least 0.4 mg of folic acid every day and eat a healthy diet containing foods high in folate like romaine lettuce, chickpeas and eggs, as well as foods fortified with folic acid such as cereal, bread and pasta.

A diet rich in vitamins and minerals cannot supply all the daily folic acid that you need. That is why it is important to take a folic acid supplement.

### When to take it

Get into the habit of taking a multivitamin every day. To help you remember, take it when you do another regular daily activity such as brushing your teeth or eating a meal.

If you are planning a pregnancy, take at least 0.4 mg of folic acid daily for at least 3 months prior to conception and during your first trimester.

### Are you high risk?

Any woman who can become pregnant risks having a baby with an NTD. The risk may increase if you:

- Had a previous pregnancy affected by an NTD
- Have a personal or family history of NTDs (or your partner has such history)
- Have insulin-dependent diabetes
- Use certain anti-seizure medications
- Are clinically obese
- Abuse alcohol or
- Are of Celtic, Northern Chinese, Cree or Sikh heritage.

If one or more of these factors apply to you, you may require a higher amount of folic acid daily to reduce the risk of NTDs. Consult your healthcare provider whether or not you are planning to get pregnant.

