

**Folic Acid: A “B” Vitamin for a
Healthier YOU!**

**Alabama Department of Public Health’s
Alabama Folic Acid Council
and the University of South Alabama's
Alabama Birth Defects Surveillance and
Prevention Program**

A decorative graphic consisting of a light blue circle on the left side of the slide. A large black left square bracket is positioned to the left of the circle, and a large blue right square bracket is positioned to the right of the circle. The text 'Course Outline' is centered within a white horizontal bar that spans across the middle of the slide.

Course Outline

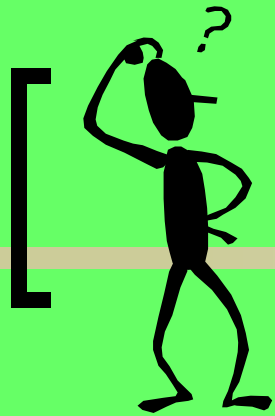
- What is folic acid?
- Why is folic acid important?
- What are Neural Tube Defects?
- How do you get enough folic acid?
- How much folic acid do you need?



[What is Folic Acid]

- A “B” Vitamin
- Synthetic form better absorbed
- **Everyone** needs folic acid!!

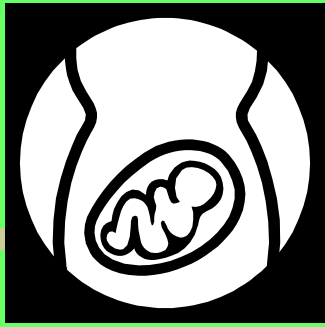




Why Is Folic Acid Important?

Health Benefits to Everyone

- *Helps your body form red blood cells and DNA*
- *Promotes normal growth and development*
- *May play a role in prevention of certain cancers*
- *Reduces your risk for heart attack and stroke*
- *Can Prevent some Birth Defects*



Birth Defects

- Can happen to any developing baby.
- 3,000 - 5,000 different birth defects.
- Birth defects: Leading cause of infant death.
- Folic acid can prevent neural tube defects.



Neural Tube Defects (NTDs)

- NTDs are defects of the brain or spine
- Approximately 4,000 pregnancies in the U.S. affected by NTDs each year
- Folic acid can help prevent up to 70% of NTDs if taken before becoming pregnant

Neural Tube Defects



Anencephaly



Spina Bifida



Encephalocele



U. S. Public Health Service Recommendation- 1992

- All women who could possibly get pregnant should take 400 micrograms of folic acid every day.
- Women who have already had a baby with a NTD and want to have another baby should take *4 milligrams* of folic acid daily (ten times the regular dose) one month before becoming pregnant and the first three months of pregnancy.

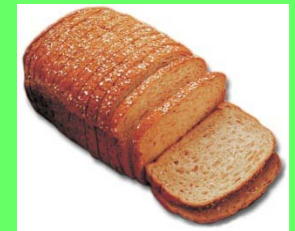
Sources of: Folate

- Dark green, leafy vegetables
 - romaine lettuce
 - broccoli
 - spinach
- Avocados, corn & dried beans
- Peanuts, sunflower seeds
- Orange juice
- Beef liver, lean beef
- Egg yolk



Folic acid

- Enriched whole grains and fortified cereals
 - white or whole wheat breads
 - oatmeal and cereals
- Multivitamins



Super Fortified Cereals



Fortification of Grain Products with Folic Acid



“Super Fortified” Cereals



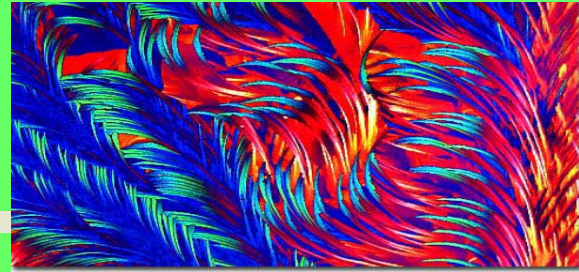
How much folic acid do you need?

Everyone needs 400 mcg daily by...

- Taking a vitamin supplement containing 400 mcg of folic acid, or
- Eating a fortified breakfast cereal with 100% of the RDA, or
- Adding enriched foods and foods high in folate into your diet



[Resource list]



- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/folicacid
- March of Dimes
www.marchofdimes.com
- Spina Bifida Association of America
www.sbaa.org (Got a Minute?)
- Health Care Provider
- State or County Health Department