



**SPINA BIFIDA  
ASSOCIATION**

## **FOLIC ACID**

Many things can affect a baby, including family genes and things women may come in contact with during pregnancy. Taking folic acid cannot guarantee having a healthy baby, but it can help.

### **What is folic acid?**

Folic acid helps the body make cells. When a woman is pregnant, she needs more folic acid than usual so her baby can develop normally. Spina Bifida often occurs in a fetus before a woman even knows she is pregnant. So women should take folic acid every day to have healthy babies. Research has shown that if all women who could possibly become pregnant were to take a multivitamin with folic acid, the risk of neural tube defects like Spina Bifida could be reduced by up to 70%.

### **Where can I get folic acid?**

Folic acid is in multivitamins and foods like green vegetables, fruits and juices. Some foods like cereal and bread have folic acid added to them. A diet with a lot of folic acid is good for you, but most people do not get enough through food alone. The best way to get the right amount is to take a vitamin with folic acid every day.

### **How much folic acid do I need?**

Women who could become pregnant should take 400 mcg (0.4 mg) of folic acid through a vitamin.

Women who have a child or had a pregnancy affected by Spina Bifida or have Spina Bifida themselves should take 4000 mcg (4.0 mg) of folic acid for one to three months before pregnancy. This amount of folic acid is higher than what you can get in the store, so you will need to see a doctor for a prescription. So, it's important for these women to plan any future pregnancy.

### **Questions?**

Call 800-621-3141

Web: [www.spinabifidaassociation.org](http://www.spinabifidaassociation.org)

*This information does not constitute medical advice for any individual. As specific cases may vary from the general information presented here, SBA advises readers to consult a qualified medical or other professional on an individual basis.*

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