



Folic Acid Helps Prevent Neural Tube Defects

January 6th- January 12th marks national folic acid awareness week. Taylor Regional wants to ensure that all women of child bearing age understand the importance of consuming the appropriate dosage of folic acid. Adequate folic acid intake is important for the prevention of birth defects. The CDC and the US Public Health Service urge every woman who could become pregnant to consume 400 micrograms (400 mcg) of folic acid every day.

What Is Folic Acid?

Folic acid is a B vitamin. Our bodies use it to make new cells. Everyone needs folic acid, but it is particularly important for women who can become pregnant! If a woman has enough folic acid in her body before she is pregnant, it can help prevent some major birth defects of the baby's brain and spine. These birth defects are called neural tube defects.

When should I start taking folic acid?

Neural tube birth defects of the brain and spine happen in the first few weeks of pregnancy, often before a woman finds out that she is pregnant. All women should get in the habit of taking folic acid daily even when they are not planning to get pregnant. For folic acid to help, you need to take it every day - start before you become pregnant and continue taking it during pregnancy.

How can I get enough folic acid?

- By taking a multivitamin or a small, single supplement of folic acid daily. Folic acid pills and most multivitamins sold in the United States have 100% of the daily value of folic acid; check the label to be sure.

OR

- Eating a healthy diet that contains lots of fruits and vegetables and foods fortified with folic acid. Foods containing folate include fruits; green, leafy vegetables; and dried beans and legumes. Eating a serving of breakfast cereal every day that has been enriched with 100% of the daily value of folic acid. Not every cereal has this amount however. Check the label on the side of the box, and look for one that has "100%" next to folic acid.

Taylor Regional hopes that by providing folic acid awareness we can help promote healthy pregnancies.