

All Women, Pass the test: Take Vitamin Folic Acid every Day

Can you become pregnant? Folic Acid plays an important part in helping to prevent a very serious birth defect. This serious birth defect is called spina bifida. Spina bifida is a crippling disease. Many children born with spina bifida also have learning problems.

How to make sure you are getting the folic acid that you need every day? There are a couple of ways to make sure you are getting enough Folic Acid every day. One such way is to take a multivitamin that has the recommended 400 micrograms of Folic Acid in it. Another way is getting a breakfast cereal that has 100 per cent of the Daily Value for Folic Acid. Check the food label for this information. Some foods like enriched rice and enriched pastas provide part of the recommended Folic Acid that could prevent spina bifida.

Other ways to get the vitamin? In foods, folic acid is also known as folate. Before your body can use folates, it has to be changed to Folic Acid. A good way to get folates is by eating plenty of fruits and veggies. Fruits like oranges, strawberries are good sources of folate. Veggies like broccoli, asparagus, spinach or any green leafy veggie are good sources, too. Beans, nuts are also sources of folate. Eat them often as part of a healthy diet that includes 400 micrograms of Folic Acid found in the vitamin pill or in a fortified cereal.

Get into the habit of taking Folic Acid every day. Preventing the birth defect spina bifida is a serious business. Be your best! Take Folic acid every day starting today!

For more information about preventing other serious birth defects, log on to www.marchofdimes.com, www.folicacidnow.net, www.osceolahealth.org, look under community nutrition program. Make sure you talk to your doctor if you have had a pregnancy affected by a birth defect.

Marie LoPresti RD, LD/N is Osceola County Health Department's Community Nutritionist. To know more about nutrition seminars for diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and weight management, call 407-343-2082. Classes are free of charge regardless of place of residency. To learn more about services provided by the Health Department in Kissimmee, St. Cloud or Poinciana, call 407-343-2000. WIC, a supplemental nutrition program for children through age five and for pregnant and lactating moms, can be reached by calling 407-343-2085.