

Folic Acid

All women of child bearing age should take a vitamin that contains 400 mcg of folic acid each day as well as eating foods high in folic acid.

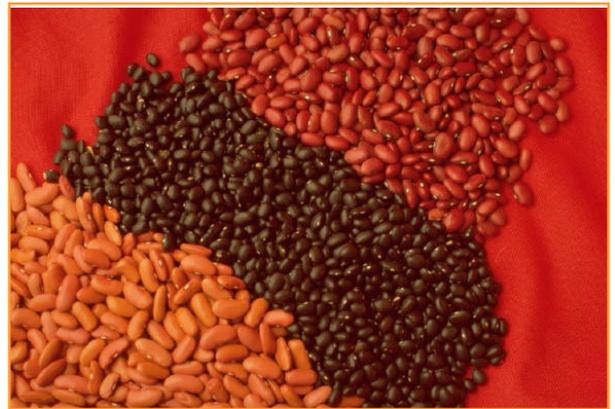
You probably know that it is important to eat well while you are pregnant, **but . . .** Did you know it is important for you to eat well **before** you get pregnant?

If you are healthy and eating many types of good food when you become pregnant, you'll have a much better chance of having a healthy baby.

What Is Folic Acid?

One nutrient that is very important before you're pregnant and in the early stages of pregnancy is folic acid. This is one of the B vitamins and is found in many foods. Research shows adequate folic acid can help prevent serious birth defects.

It is very important that you include foods with folic acid in your eating plan every day. The good news is that it's easy to get folic acid from the foods you eat everyday!



Beans are a great source of folic acid!

What Foods Contain Folic Acid?

Rich sources of folic acid contain more than 80 mcg per serving:

- Beans (black, pinto, navy, kidney, lima, garbanzo)
- Peas (black-eyed, green, split) and lentils
- Fortified breakfast cereals
- Enriched rice and pasta
- Sunflower seeds
- Spinach
- Turnip greens
- Asparagus
- Orange juice

Other sources include the following:

- Enriched breads
- Peanuts and peanut butter
- Romaine lettuce
- Mustard greens
- Brussels sprouts
- Avocado
- Broccoli
- Beets
- Artichokes
- Baked potato with skin
- Papaya and pineapple juice

Here's a recipe for an easy salad that will help you get some of the folic acid you need before, during and after your pregnancy.

Sunshine Salad

2 cups lettuce (romaine is good), torn into pieces
2 cups raw spinach, washed well and torn into pieces
2 oranges or 1 can (11 ounces) mandarin oranges
2 slices red onion
Optional: sliced mushrooms, avocado, water chestnuts or jicama

Dressing*

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 tablespoons orange juice
1 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon vinegar

*Use bottled dressing if desired.

1. Place greens in a large bowl.
2. Using a sharp knife, remove skin from oranges.
3. Slice orange crossways. Cut each slice into quarters. Eliminate this step if using canned oranges; just drain. Place orange sections on top of greens.
4. Separate the onion rings and arrange on top of salad. Add optional ingredients as desired.
5. Shake all of the ingredients for dressing in a small jar with a tight lid. Pour over salad just before serving.

Serves 4

