



NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FOLIC ACID

National Folic Acid Awareness Week January 4-10, 2010

How to Pitch

Pitching is essentially selling the media on the story you want covered. The best way to do this is to develop a relationship with the reporter. Remember that they are a person, just like you! They get a bunch of phone calls everyday, so your pitch has to be short and catch their attention.

Rules of Pitching

- 1) **Do your homework** – Start by creating a targeted media list in your area. What reporters do you already know from previous efforts? What are your dream publications to get into? From there, go to Google and do a little research on your publication and your reporter. Gain a sense of what they write about and see if they have covered folic acid before (that's a great jumping off point... "I saw that you wrote an article about folic acid and pregnancy in March, so I thought you might be interested to know that Folic Acid Awareness Week is coming up").
- 2) **Write out your pitch** – Write out your three to four sentence pitch and practice it once or twice. When you're on the phone with a reporter, you'll have something to reference.
- 3) **Use the phone** – Always try to call a reporter *before* you e-mail them or send them information via fax. Talking to someone is far more effective than written communication in this industry.
- 4) **Use your resources** – The news release and key messages are for your use. The news release can be sent out to the media to give them additional information after a pitch, and the key messages are the points that you want to get across to the reporter during a pitch or in a subsequent e-mail.
- 5) **Always follow-up** – Follow the directions below for each scenario:
 - a. *If on your first call, you get a voice mail* – Leave an abbreviated pitch and your contact information. Mention that you will also send along an e-mail with a news release (pasted in the body of the e-mail, rather than as an attachment) and do so. Follow-up with them two days later to find out if they're interested and to see if you can get them additional information
 - b. *If you make phone contact, and they are interested* – Send the news release via e-mail and follow-up with them two to three days later to see if you can get them more information or if you can set up an interview for them.
 - c. **Note** – no matter the scenario, always follow-up your pitches. The more you talk to them and give them story ideas, the more likely a story will be placed.
- 6) **Keep track of what you're doing** – Keep good notes on your pitching and what you've done so far (i.e. what reporters you've talked to, who is interested, who got a news release, etc.) Not only will this help you identify placements, it will keep you organized when you follow-up with reporters.
- 7) **Track placements** – If a story is going to run, try to get a copy of it from the reporter you worked with.