

Folic Acid and Neural Tube Defects (NTDs)

Although all enriched cereals and grain products in the U.S. are fortified with the B-vitamin folic acid, only one-third of U.S. women of childbearing age consume the recommended amount. Taking a multivitamin with folic acid every day is a key way that women can get the recommended amount of 400 mcg.

Women especially need folic acid, even if not planning to become pregnant, since 50% of all pregnancies are unplanned. Taking folic acid before pregnancy reduces the risk of birth defects of the brain and spine, called neural tube defects, by up to 70%.

Not only do Latinas have higher rates of NTD-affected pregnancies, they also have the lowest awareness/knowledge about folic acid than women of other race/ethnic groups, and lower consumption of folic acid than white non-Hispanic women.

January 4-10 Is Folic Acid Awareness Week

You never know what the New Year will bring. So, whether or not you're planning to have a baby this year, (about 50 percent of all pregnancies are unplanned) you can start the new year with habits that will help give a baby a healthy start in life.

January 4-10 is Folic Acid Awareness Week and a great time to start taking a vitamin with 400 mcg of the B-vitamin folic acid every day. Starting to take folic acid before becoming pregnant is an important way to reduce the risk of birth defects of the brain or spine called neural tube defects (NTD) by up to 70 percent. NTDs occur in the first weeks of fetal development, often before a woman even knows she is pregnant.

The **ORGANIZATION** is a member of the National Council on Folic Acid, a partnership of national organizations, associations, and state folic acid councils reaching over 100 million people a year with the folic acid message. For more information about folic acid and National Folic Acid Awareness Week, visit www.folicacidinfo.org or **ORGANIZATION's** website at **URL** or call **ORGANIZATION** at **PHONE**.