

Maternal and Child Health Priority Folic Acid Fact Sheet



Folic Acid

- Folic acid and folate are terms used to describe a complex B vitamin that is important to women's health.¹
- Current recommendations are for all women of childbearing age to consume 400 micrograms of folic acid every day.¹
- Folic acid, if taken before and during the first weeks of pregnancy, protects against neural tube defects, a severe form of brain and spine birth defects.¹
- Women should consult their doctor about folic acid when planning a pregnancy; especially if on medication to treat digestive disorders, rheumatoid arthritis, Type 2 diabetes, seizures or sleep disorders.²



What Foods Contain Folic Acid?²

Natural FoodsEnriched FoodsGreen PeasBreadsRomaine LettuceFlourEggsPastaOrange JuiceRice

Peanuts Breakfast Cereal Spinach

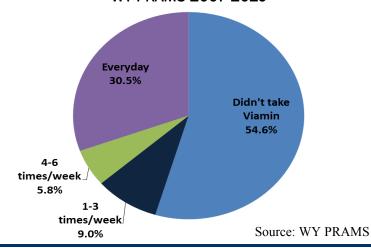
Lentils

Folic Acid Supplementation

- Prenatal and many multi-vitamins contain the necessary daily value of folic acid.²
- Folic acid from a vitamin or enriched foods is more readily absorbed by the bloodstream than natural folate.³
- Do not exceed 1,000 micrograms of folic acid daily to avoid masking potential vitamin B12 deficiency.²

Multivitamin Use in Wyoming

Multivitamin Intake the Month Before Pregnancy, WY PRAMS 2007-2010



Between 2007 and 2010, 54.6% of Wyoming women <u>did not take</u> a multivitamin in the month before pregnancy.

For more information about WY PRAMS visit: http://www.health.wyo.gov/familyhealth/mchepi/ prams.html

^{*}This list does not include all foods containing folic acid



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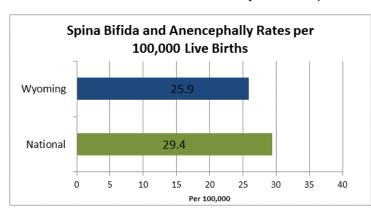
Pregnancy Intention

An unintended pregnancy is a pregnancy that is mistimed, unplanned, or unwanted at the time of conception.⁴ Data from the Wyoming PRAMS survey from 2007 to 2010 indicate that 41.1% of live births in Wyoming were unintended. Among women that intended to become pregnant in Wyoming between 2007 and 2010, 39.5% consumed a daily multivitamin, significantly higher than consumption among women who had an unintended pregnancy (17.9%). Folic acid is critical in the months before pregnancy and the first weeks of pregnancy to help prevent birth defects.²



Neural Tubal Defects

A neural tube defect (NTD) is a birth defect of the brain and spinal cord; most often anencephaly or spina bifida.⁵ Anencephaly is the absence of most or all of the brain and skull; with rare exception it is fatal at birth⁶. Spinal NTDs, collectively called spina bifida, can occur anywhere along the spinal column and are found in varying degrees of severity.⁵ The rate of spina bifida and anencephaly have declined significantly since mandatory folic acid fortification of grain was implemented in the United States in 1998. Rates have declined by 30% for spina bifida and 50% for anencephaly during this



time frame.⁷ Similar rates of NTDs have been observed in Wyoming and nationally since fortification (Figure).

Source: Wyoming Vital Statistics Services, 2006-2010

References:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Recommendations for the Use of Folic Acid to Reduce the Number of Cases of Spina Bifida and Other Neural Tube Defects. In: Recommendations and Reports. MMWR 41 (RR-14); 001; 1992 September 11.
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- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Unintended Pregnancy Prevention, Accessed: Sept 28, 2012. http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/unintendedpregnancy
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- 7. Mathews TJ. *Trends in Spina Bifida and Anencephalus in the United States, 1991-2006.* NCHS Health E-Stats. April 2009.



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Commit to your health.