



Folate (Folic Acid) and Pregnancy

Good Sources of Folic Acid (1/2 cup serving):

Spinach (cooked)	131 mcg
Black-eyed peas	101 mcg
Breakfast cereals (fortified)	100 mcg
White rice	90 mcg
Asparagus	89 mcg
Spaghetti (enriched)	83 mcg
Brussel sprouts	78 mcg
Romaine lettuce	64 mcg
Avocado	59 mcg
Spinach (raw)	58 mcg

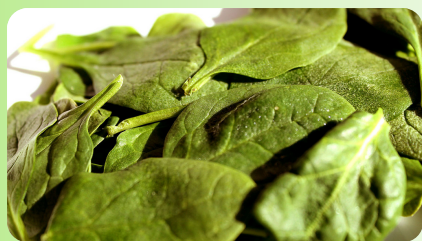


Photo by: [Daniella Segura](#)/Flickr

Folic acid or **folate** is an important B vitamin that your body needs both *before* you become pregnant and *in the early stages* of pregnancy to help your baby's spinal cord and brain develop normally. The term **folate** is used, when referring to the form found naturally in foods. The term **folic acid** is used when referring to the form that is used in supplements or fortified foods. 400 micrograms is recommended before becoming pregnant and 600 micrograms during pregnancy.

Many dark green vegetables such as spinach, asparagus, and Brussels sprouts are great sources of folate. Folate or folic acid is also found in beans, legumes, some citrus fruits, and fortified breads and cereals.

3 easy ways to increase your folate/folic acid intake:

Add more greens and beans to your diet

- Purchase a variety of greens that you can mix up in a salad for your lunches during the week.
- Add some spinach, kale, or chard to your scrambled eggs.
- Try broccoli and asparagus with dip for a great snack.
- Make a bean and rice burrito packed with greens and other toppings of your choice.
- Add a can of beans to your favorite vegetable soup.

Eat more foods fortified with folic acid

- Choose breads, pastas, and breakfast cereals that have folic acid added to them.
- Read the ingredient label to be sure that folic acid has been added.

Take a folic acid supplement

Folic acid, the form found in supplements, is absorbed better by your body than *folate*, the form naturally occurring in foods. So, by only eating foods that naturally contain folate you may not be getting as much as you need during pregnancy. For this reason, a folic acid supplement or prenatal vitamin is recommended for women planning a pregnancy as well as for those who are already pregnant.