



Vitamin B9 (Folate)

Did You Know?

Most Americans get enough folate, but the following groups are more likely to have a folate deficiency:

- Women ages 14-30, especially before or during pregnancy
- Non-Hispanic black women
- People with alcoholism
- People with conditions that can decrease nutrient absorption
 - Celiac Disease
 - Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Talk to your doctor if you are concerned you may be at risk for having a folate deficiency.



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Folate, also known as folic acid, is a water-soluble B vitamin. Folate helps break down proteins, create red blood cells, and lower risk for heart disease. Also, folate is very important during pregnancy because it reduces risk for neural tube birth defects in newborns. Since it is a water-soluble vitamin, it cannot be stored in the body and needs to be consumed daily.

How much do I need?

- 400 micrograms per day for adults 14 or older
- 600 micrograms per day for pregnant women
- 500 micrograms per day for lactating women
- For recommendations for infants, children, and teens, check out the chart in CSU Extension's Fact Sheet: [Water-Soluble Vitamins: B-Complex and Vitamin C.](#)

Food Sources

Folate can be found in dark green leafy vegetables, liver, meats, fish, whole grains, legumes, and citrus fruits. Folate is also found in fortified grains and cereals. Not all grains and cereals have been fortified with folate. Check the nutrition label to see if folate has been added.

What happens if I don't get enough?

An inadequate amount of folate can impair growth by inhibiting cell growth and protein production. Signs of folate deficiency include diarrhea and anemia. For women who are pregnant or of child-bearing age, low amounts of folate can cause neural tube birth defects such as spina bifida in newborns.

Can I get too much?

There are no known benefits for consuming more than the recommended amount of folate. Too much folate can interfere with some medications and may hide an existing vitamin B12 deficiency.