

Folate

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Why is Folate so Important???

Folate is a B vitamin complex that is very important for good health. Some of folate's most important roles include:

1) Red blood cell production—which can help prevent anemia, and keep us feeling energized.

2) Disease prevention. Folate helps lower blood homocysteine levels, which is important for the prevention of heart disease. Folate may also help prevent certain types of cancer.

3) Prevention of neural tube defects (birth defects).

Folate is most important before a woman becomes pregnant, and during the first month of pregnancy. Unfortunately, most women do not know they are pregnant until after the first month, when it is too late to prevent these birth defects.



How Much is Enough?

The daily recommended intake for folate is **400 mcg per day**. This can easily be achieved by eating foods which are fortified with folic acid (another form of folate), such as many cereals and breads.

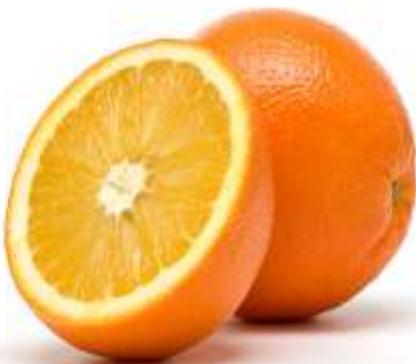
However, consuming sources of folate in their natural forms, such as fresh fruits, vegetables and beans, can provide an array of *additional* benefits!

Foods that are naturally high in folate also tend to be high in other important nutrients like vitamins, minerals, fiber and protein. All of these provide additional health benefits and protection against diseases.

Extra Benefits:

Unlike processed snack foods (think fatty, salty and sugary foods), eating foods that are naturally high in nutrients can help you:

- Have healthier looking skin, hair and nails
- Build and maintain muscle
- Feel healthier and more energized.



Easy Ways To Get More Folate

Eating more folate is easy once you know what foods contain folate.

Here are a few ideas to help you start adding more high folate foods to your diet:

1) **Start small.** At first, start by making small, simple changes. Try to add just one high folate item each day, like a piece of fruit or a vegetable. Once you get used to this, it will become easier to include a little bit more each day.

2) **Pack a snack.** Simply *adding* a high folate snack mid-morning or mid-afternoon can make a difference. Try packing a handful of almonds, an orange or other fruit, or some cut vegeta-

bles and dip. If you already bring a snack, try replacing a not-so-nutritious snack with one of these options. It will help you stay healthier, energized and feeling better overall.

3) **Choose one high folate food at lunch.** You can choose to simply add a food such as beans, nuts, a fruit or a vegetable— or you can make a conscious decision in the lunch line to replace a less nutritious food with a healthier choice. For example, instead of getting fried potatoes, you could choose a cooked or fresh vegetable with dip. Or you could choose a piece of fresh fruit instead of a candy bar or cookie.

4) **Eat breakfast.** Eating breakfast is one of the easiest ways to get more folate and folic acid! Folic acid is a form of folate that is added to certain foods. Cereal grains and breads can be excellent sources of folic acid, while fruits like oranges, orange juice and strawberries are good natural sources of folate. If you already eat breakfast, try adding fruit to your cereal or adding a glass of orange juice. Eating breakfast not only provides folate but can also help you stay focused in your morning classes.



What Foods are High in Folate?

Leafy Greens:

- Spinach
- Romaine Lettuce

Other Vegetables:

- Broccoli
- Asparagus
- Avocado

Citrus Fruits

- Oranges, Orange Juice
- Melons
- Strawberries

Beans, Nuts and Seeds

- Black beans
- Mixed nuts (peanuts, almonds)
- Sunflower seeds

Here's an example of 100% of your daily value (DV) for folate:

Salad:

1 cup spinach (15% DV)
1/4 cup sunflower seeds (19% DV)

Burrito:

1/2 cup black beans (32% DV)
1 cup white rice (38%)