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FOLIC ACID MAY HELP PREVENT SOME BIRTH DEFECTS

The U.S. Public Health Service recently recommended that all women of childbearing years should consume 0.4 milligrams (sometimes called 400 micrograms) of folic acid every day to help prevent the occurrence of neural tube defects, such as spinal bifida, in their babies. The recommendations cover all women of childbearing age because neural tube defects develop during the first month of pregnancy, often before a woman knows she has conceived.

Folic acid is found in many foods, including dark green leafy vegetables, fortified cereals, citrus fruits and juices, yeast breads and beans. However, fairly large amounts of these foods must be consumed to reach the 400 microgram recommendation. Therefore, multivitamins that contain at least 400 micrograms of folic acid or folic acid supplements are recommended.

Folic Acid Content of Common Foods and Over-The-Counter Vitamin Supplements (micrograms = µg)

Breakfast Cereals (1cup portion)	µg	Other Foods	µg	Vitamin Supplements	µg
Total	466	Chicken Liver 3oz after cooking	655	Safeway, 1 a day	400
Total Raisin Bran	401	Beef liver 3oz after cooking	185	Safeway daily + iron	400
Product 19	400	Black-eyed peas canned, 2c	187	Stresstabs 600, 1 a day	400
Grape Nuts	400	Sunflower seeds, raw, dried, 2c	164	One-A-Day Stressguard	400
All Bran	300	Black beans, canned, 2c	127	Geritol Complete	400
Bran Buds	297	White navy beans, canned, 2c	127	Centrum Advance Formula	400
Captain Crunch	227	Asparagus, cooked from fresh, 2c	121	One-A-Day Maximum Formula	400
Post Raisin Bran	200	Orange juice, ready to drink,			
Corn Bran	148	unsweetened, 8oz	109		
Kellogg's Raisin Bran	133	Wheat germ, ready to eat, 3c	99		
King Vitamin	118	Spinach, cooked fm fresh, 2c	97		
		Turnip greens, cooked fm fresh, 2c	85		
		Brussel sprouts,cooked fm fresh, 2c	78		

RECOMMENDED DIETARY REQUIREMENTS FOR WOMEN AGE 25 AND OLDER PREGNANT WITH SINGLETON AND MULTIFETAL PREGNANCY

Nutrient	Singleton Pregnancy	Twin/Triplet Pregnancy	Dietary Sources
Folic Acid	400 µg	800 µg	Leafy vegetables, liver
Vitamin D	10 µg	15 µg	Fortified dairy products
Iron	30 mg	50 mg	Meats, eggs, grains
Calcium	1200 mg	1800 mg	Dairy products
Phosphorus	1200 mg	1800 mg	Meats
Pyridoxine	2.2 mg	4.0 mg	Meats, liver, grains
Thiamin	1.5 mg	3.0 mg	Enriched grains, pork
Zinc	15 mg	30 mg	Meats, seafood, eggs
Riboflavin	1.6 mg	3.0 mg	Meats, liver, grains
Protein	60 mg	120 mg	Meats, fish, poultry, dairy
Iodine	175 µg	300 µg	Iodized salt, seafood
Vitamin C	70 mg	150 mg	Citrus fruits, tomatoes
Energy	2500 Kcal	3000 Kcal	Protein, fat, carbohydrate
Magnesium	320 mg	450 mg	Seafood, legumes, grains
Niacin	17 mg	25 mg	Meats, nuts, legumes
Vitamin B-12	2.2 µg	3.0 µg	Animal proteins
Vitamin A	800 µg	1000 µg	Dark green, yellow or orange fruits and vegetables, liver