

Folic Acid Patch Program



Must complete 6 of the 10 activities at a minimum:

- Develop and complete a food diary, making notes of foods with folic acid/folate along with multivitamins/supplements taken.
- Research the diet of an ethnic population, a region of the world, or a region of the United States, explain why they may or may not be getting enough folic acid through food and/or multivitamins and make suggestions.
- Write a script for a commercial, emphasizing food(s) high in folic acid/folate and the importance of taking a multivitamin containing folic acid.
- Write a rap or cheer about the function of folic acid/folate, vitamin supplements, and foods high in folate and perform it for your troop.
- Do a web search on folic acid and write a summary of your findings, citing references
- Create a newsletter focusing on healthy eating and taking multivitamins with folic acid; distribute it at a public place.
- Draw a cartoon that teaches younger children about folic acid, foods, and multivitamin supplements and do a brief presentation on folic acid for a class of younger children.
- Create a book of recipes high in folic acid; have friends, family members, etc. submit recipes.
- Plan a school-wide campaign to promote folic acid.
- Do an interview with your school's nutrition staff on how they select healthy menus and make a list of foods served high in folic acid/folate. Share this information with your class.

** Included in this packet are information sheets (for those that do not have Internet access during troop meetings), diary cards to give to your girls, and a fun quiz.

To receive your FREE patches, send a completed evaluation form provided with this packet.



Girl Scouts®
Where Girls Grow Strong™

The Folic Acid Basics

The B vitamin folic acid helps prevent birth defects. If a woman has enough folic acid in her body **before and while she is pregnant**, her baby is less likely to have a major birth defect of the brain or spine.

Most women do not know how important folic acid is for their bodies and for the health of a baby they might have in the future. They also do not know that a woman needs to take folic acid every day, starting **before** she is pregnant, for it to work to prevent birth defects.

Birth defects of a baby's brain or spine happen in the first few weeks of pregnancy, often **before** a woman knows that she is pregnant. That is why it is important for a woman to get enough folic acid each day, starting before she is pregnant.

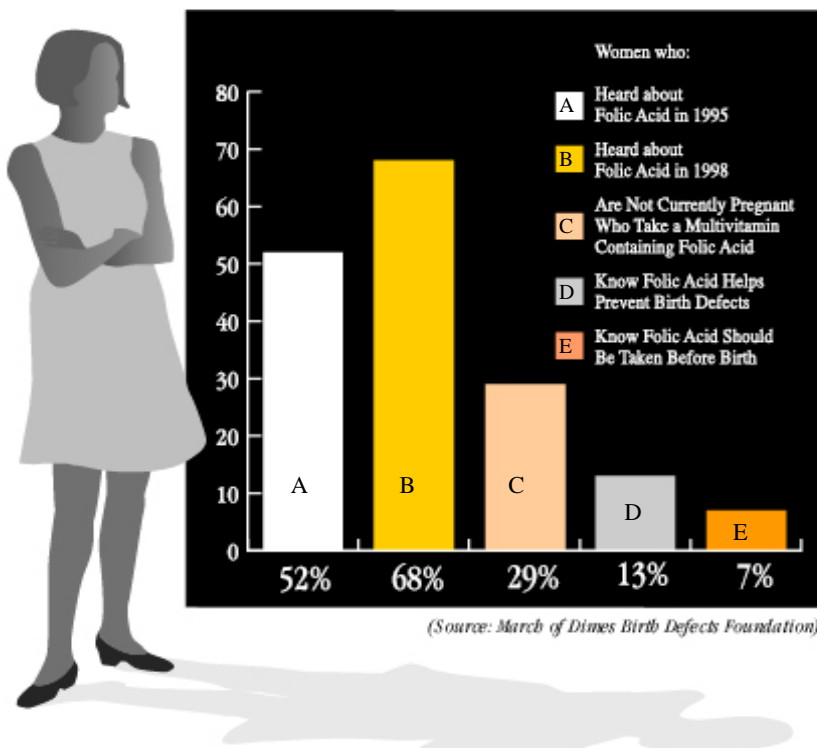
A woman's body uses folic acid to make healthy new cells for her baby. Scientists are not sure how folic acid works to prevent birth defects, but they do know that it is needed for making the cells that will form a baby's brain, spine, organs, skin, and bones.

Every woman needs folic acid for the healthy new cells her body makes every day . . . even if she is not planning to get pregnant.



Date: November 16, 2005

Content source: National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities



Even young girls should try to get enough folic acid every day. That way, when you're older and planning to become a mother, folic acid will already be a part of your diet.

Folic Acid

For All Women, Every Day

As a woman, you need folic acid every day, whether you're planning to get pregnant or not, for the healthy new cells your body makes daily. Think about your skin, hair, and nails. These—and other parts of your body—make new cells each day.

You might think that you can get all the folic acid and other vitamins you need from the food you eat each day. But it is hard to eat a diet that has all the nutrients you need every day. Even with careful planning, you might not get all the vitamins you need from your diet alone. That's why it's important to take a vitamin with folic acid every day.



Today's woman is busy! You know that you should exercise, eat right, and get enough sleep. You might wonder how you can fit another thing into your day. But it only takes a few seconds to take a vitamin to get all the folic acid you need!

Make it easy to remember. Try taking a vitamin when you brush your teeth. Or take it with your morning coffee, after your shower, or when you brush your hair. Seeing the vitamin bottle on the bathroom or kitchen counter can help you remember it, too. If you have children, take your vitamin when they take theirs. That sets a good example!

You can get your vitamin with folic acid in one of several ways. You can take a multivitamin or a small, single supplement of folic acid. These days, multivitamins with folic acid come in chewable chocolate or fruit flavors, liquids, and large oval or smaller round pills. Many stores offer a single folic acid supplement for just pennies a day. Another good choice is a store brand multivitamin, which includes most of the vitamins you need each day. Unless your doctor suggests a special type, you do not need to choose among vitamins. A basic multivitamin meets the needs of most women.

A single serving of many [breakfast cereals](#) also has the amount of folic acid that you need each day. Check the label! Look for cereals that have 100% daily value (DV) of folic acid in a serving.

Think back to when you were a child and you took your vitamin—how easy it was to chew up that fruit-flavored tablet in the fun shape of your favorite cartoon character. You may have been told: "Take your vitamin. It's good for you." Today, taking a vitamin with folic acid is just as easy—and just as good for you!

Birth Defects That Can Be Caused by Folic Acid Deficiency

Folic Acid Can Help Prevent Birth Defects

Folic acid can reduce certain birth defects of the brain and spinal cord by more than 70 percent. These birth defects are called neural tube defects (NTDs).

Q: What are neural tube defects (NTDs)?

Neural tube defects (NTDs) are major birth defects of a baby's brain or spine. They happen when the neural tube (that later turns into the brain and spine) doesn't form right, and the baby's brain or spine is damaged. This happens within the first few weeks a woman is pregnant, often before a woman knows that she is pregnant.

- The two most common NTDs are spina bifida (spi-na bif-a-da) and anencephaly (an-en-sef-a-lee). These birth defects can cause lifelong disability or death.
- Many NTDs (up to 70%) can be prevented by getting enough of the B vitamin folic acid every day, starting before a woman gets pregnant.

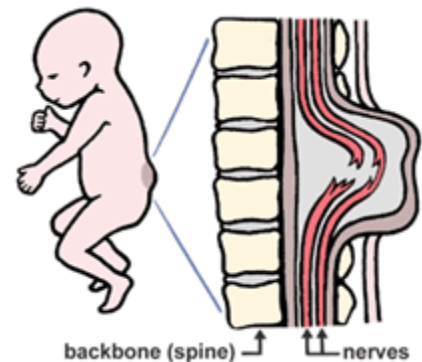
Q: What are spina bifida and anencephaly?

Spina bifida (spi-na bif-a-da) and anencephaly (an-en-sef-a-lee) are two common types of NTDs. About 3,000 pregnancies in the United States are affected by spina bifida or anencephaly each year. Many of these defects could be prevented if all women got enough of the B vitamin folic acid every day, starting **before** they get pregnant.

Spina bifida occurs when the spine and back bones do not close all the way. When this happens, the spinal cord and back bones do not form as they should. A sac of fluid comes through an opening in the baby's back. Much of the time, part of the spinal cord is in this sac and it is damaged. Most children born with spina bifida live full lives, but they often have lifelong disabilities and need many surgeries. Some of their problems include:

- Not being able to move lower parts of their body. (Some might need to use crutches, braces, or wheelchairs to get around.)
- Loss of bowel and bladder control. (Some might have to wear protective clothing. Others learn new ways to empty their bladders and bowels.)
- Fluid building up and putting pressure on the brain (hydrocephalus), which needs to be fixed with an operation
- Learning disabilities.
- Allergy to latex (a created material found in some rubber-type products such as balloons or hospital gloves).

Children born with spina bifida don't all have the same needs. Some children's problems are much more severe than others. Even so, with the right care, most of these children will grow up to lead full and productive lives.



Anencephaly occurs when the brain and skull bones do not form right. When this happens, part or all of the brain and skull bones might be missing. Babies with this defect die before birth (miscarriage) or shortly after birth.



Folic Acid Food Diary

List foods that you ate that contained FOLIC ACID or FOLATE.

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Name _____



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List foods that you ate that contained FOLIC ACID or FOLATE.

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Name _____



Folic Acid Food Diary

List foods that you ate that contained FOLIC ACID or FOLATE.

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Name _____

Make copies on heavy card stock, cut cards, and give one to each girl.

CEREALS THAT CONTAIN 100% OF THE DAILY VALUE (DV) OF FOLIC ACID

These cereals contain 100% of the DV of folic acid.

General Mills Harmony®
 General Mills Multi-Grain Cheerios®
 General Mills Multi-Grain Cheerios®Plus
 General Mills Total®Brown Sugar and Oat
 General Mills Total®Corn Flakes
 General Mills Total®Raisin Bran
 General Mills Total®Whole Grain
 Kashi's Heart to Heart
 Kellogg's®All-Bran®Original
 Kellogg's®All-Bran®with Extra Fiber
 Kellogg's®All-Bran®Bran Buds®
 Kellogg's®Complete®Oat Bran Flakes
 Kellogg's®Complete®Wheat Bran Flakes
 Kellogg's®Crispix®
 Kellogg's®Healthy Choice™Almond Crunch with Raisins
 Kellogg's®Healthy Choice™Low-Fat Granola with Raisins
 Kellogg's®Healthy Choice™Low-Fat Granola without Raisins
 Kellogg's®Healthy Choice™Mueslix
 Kellogg's®Healthy Choice™Toasted Brown Sugar Squares
 Kellogg's®Just Right®Fruit and Nut
 Kellogg's®Product 19®
 Kellogg's®Smart Start®
 Kellogg's®Special K®
 Kellogg's®Special K®Plus™
 Malt-O-Meal®Quaker Oats Apple Zaps® (Bagged)
 Quaker Oats Cap'n Crunch Red box®
 Quaker Oats Cap'n Crunch with Crunch berries®
 Quaker Oats Cap'n Crunch's Oops! All Berries®
 Quaker Oats Cap'n Crunch's Peanut Butter Crunch®
 Quaker Oats Cinnamon Crunch®
 Quaker Oats Cocoa Blasts® (Bagged)
 Quaker Oats Crispy Corn Puffs® (Bagged)
 Quaker Oats Crunchy Corn Bran®
 Quaker Oats Frosted Toasted Oats® (Bagged)
 Quaker Oats Fruitangy Ohs® (Bagged)
 Quaker Oats Fruity Ocean Adventure® (Bagged)
 Quaker Oats Honey Dipp's® (Bagged)
 Quaker Oats Honey Graham OH's®
 Quaker Oats Honey Grahams® (Bagged)
 Quaker Oats Honey Nut Oats® (Bagged)
 Quaker Oats King Vitamin®
 Quaker Oats Life Cereal / Cinnamon Life®
 Quaker Oats Marshmallow Safari® (Bagged)
 Quaker Oats Oat Bran RTE®
 Quaker Oats Oatmeal Squares® - Regular flavor and Cinnamon
 Quaker Oats Quisp®
 Quaker Oats Sun Country Oats®with Iron
 Quaker Oats Sweet Crunch®
 Quaker Oats Toasted Oatmeal® - Regular flavor and Honey Nut
 Quaker Oats Toasted Oats® (Bagged)

Make a list of the cereals listed here that YOU like!



Supplement Facts		
	Amount Per Serving	% Daily Value
Folic Acid	400 mcg	100%
Vitamin B12	6 mcg	100%
Pantothenic Acid	5 mg	50%
Calcium	450 mg	45%
Iron	18 mg	100%
Magnesium	50 mg	12%
Zinc	15 mg	100%

Nutritional Facts about Folic Acid

Causes of folic acid deficiency

- Poor eating habits.
- Poor absorption.
- Increased requirements, e.g. due to growth or pregnancy.
- Certain types of medication.
- Certain disease conditions.
- Alcoholism.
- Oral contraceptives (the "pill").

Foods rich in folic acid

Meat	Legumes	Starches	Fruit and Vegetables
liver (best source)	dried beans	wholegrain breads	spinach
chicken giblets	lentils	wheat flour	beetroot
kidney	spilt peas (dhals)	potato	brussel sprouts
egg yolk	soya products	sweet potato	broccoli
	almonds		cabbage
	nuts		asparagus
			banana
			oranges
			peaches

Important Guidelines

- Include more foods that are high in folic acid in the diet.
- Fruit and vegetables should be eaten raw whenever possible as cooking destroys folic acid
- Avoid alcohol in the diet as it leads to folic acid deficiency.
- *Pregnant women* have higher requirements for folic acid and should take *folic acid supplements* as advised by the doctor/dietician/nurse.
- Increase the use of wheat flour and soya flour in baking and food preparation.

Symptoms of folic acid deficiency

- Poor growth.
- Smooth, red, and painful tongue.
- Stomach and intestinal problems, e.g. diarrhea, constipation.
- No appetite.
- Fatigue/tiredness.

Folic Acid Quiz!

Name _____

What you know.....

1. Folic acid is:

- a) a B vitamin b) a form of vitamin C c) a mineral d) an E vitamin

2. Folic acid is needed for developing these in babies:

- a) brain & spine b) skin & bones c) organs d) all of these

3. Folic acid reduces the risk for:

- a) spina bifida b) anencephaly c) neural tube defects d) all of these

4. These make new cells each day:

- a) skin b) hair c) fingernails d) all of these

5. One great source for folic acid is:

- a) carrots b) fortified cereals c) rice d) all of these

6. Poor eating habits can cause folic acid deficiency.

True False

7. Only women thinking about getting pregnant should be concerned about folic acid.

True False

8. A basic multivitamin meets the needs of most women.

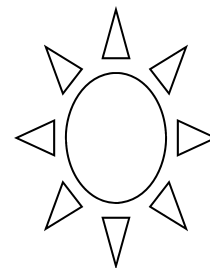
True False

9. Cooking fruits and vegetables destroys the folic acid they contain.

True False

10. Beans do not contain folic acid.

True False



Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council, Inc.

Folic Acid Program Evaluation

After submitting completed evaluation, the troop will be sent patches for the number of participants. There is no cost for the patches.

Troop leader's name: _____

Address: _____

Phone _____

Troop/group # _____ Service unit _____

Dates of program: _____ Number of participants _____

Was the program easy to use?

What activities did the girls like best?

What activities did they not enjoy?

Would you recommend this program to others?

Girl comments about the program:

Adult comments about the program:

Please complete and return form to: Program Manager, Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council;
3663 Peters Creek Road, NW, Roanoke, VA 24019-2809