

ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH FOLATE? (FOLIC ACID)

Folic acid is a B vitamin which is vital for the formation of red blood cells. Folic acid cannot be stored in the body, so you need it in your diet every day.

Anaemia, causing tiredness, can result from a lack of folate in the diet. It is such an important vitamin that all women planning a pregnancy are advised to take a supplement containing 400µg/day (0.4mg) from when they begin trying to conceive until the twelfth week of pregnancy (to help prevent neural tube defects). Pregnant women with a high risk of neural tube defects should take a supplement of 5mg/day

Folate is found in.....

- Meat (especially liver* and beef), and meat and yeast extracts like Bovril and Marmite
- Eggs and fish
- Milk and cheese
- Green leafy vegetables and salad leaves, like spinach, broccoli, watercress, rocket, kale, Brussel sprouts, peas, lettuce, beetroot, spring onions
- Granary and wholemeal bread and products made from wholemeal flour
- High fibre breakfast cereals, and cereals fortified with folic acid like breakfast cereals and some breads (check labels)
- Nuts and seeds
- Pulses such as chick peas, baked beans, lentils, black eyed beans
- Fresh fruit like avocado pears, bananas, oranges, honeydew melons, berries

*If you are pregnant, liver should not be eaten, due to its high Vitamin A content

To meet folate requirements, the following points of folate should be taken daily:

1 point = 10µg (micrograms) of folate

| | Points of Folate needed daily |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Males and females 11 + years | 20 |
| During pregnancy | 30 + 400ug supplement |
| Whilst breastfeeding | 26 |

The following list of foods will help you check your intake.

The foods are per 50g (2oz) unless otherwise stated.

| Food | Folate points |
|--|----------------------|
| Liver (lambs) | 12 |
| Lean beef | 0.5 |
| Egg, 1 boiled | 2 |
| Cheddar cheese (matchbox size) | 1.5 |
| Salmon | 1.5 |
| Bovril, 1 teaspoon | 5 |
| Peanuts | 4 |
| Cornflakes, Bran Flakes, Rice Krispies (30g serving) | 7.5 |
| Wholemeal bread, 1 slice | 1 |
| Bread fortified with folic acid, 1 slice | 3.5 |
| Orange, 1 | 2 |
| Brussels sprouts, cooked | 5 |
| Broccoli, cooked | 3 |
| Spinach, cooked | 4 |

Note: Folate can be destroyed by heat, so foods should not be overcooked or kept warm for long periods.