NATIONAL BIRTH DEFECTS PREVENTION NETWORK

Folic Acid Awareness Week

January 8 – 14, 2017

# ***Sample Article***

January 8 – 14 is Folic Acid Awareness Week, but folic acid should be part of a healthy lifestyle every day. You can start the New Year off right by taking a multivitamin with 400 micrograms (mcg) of the B-vitamin, folic acid, every day. Your body uses folic acid every day to stay healthy.

Think you are getting all of the vitamins you need from your diet alone? Think again! It is hard to get certain vitamins from food alone.

* Many believe they do not need to take multivitamins because they eat healthy foods. Folate, a different form of the same B vitamin, is found in foods such as leafy green vegetables, beans, liver and some fruit, but 50 to 90 percent of food folate is destroyed in cooking.
* Folic acid is the synthetic form of the naturally occurring folate found in foods. Folic acid is easier for your body to absorb than folate. Folic acid is found in multivitamins and fortified foods like breakfast cereal, pasta and bread.
* Multivitamins help fill in those nutrition gaps in the diet, especially when it comes to getting enough folic acid.

## **What is folic acid and why do you need it?**

* Folic acid is an essential B-vitamin; therefore, everyone needs it in order to stay in good health. Folic acid helps build DNA and your body uses it for cell growth and reproduction, fundamental building block processing and genetic material production.
* In 1998, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration started fortifying cereal grain products with folic acid in order to reduce the risk for neural tube defects (NTDs), serious birth defects of the brain and spine. While this was a great step in the fight to prevent birth defects, it is often not enough to protect all women and their potential children.
* Folic acid is water soluble, therefore it passes through your body very quickly. Taking folic acid every day ensures that you always have it in your system when your body needs it.
* It is particularly important for women of reproductive age to get 400 mcg of folic acid daily. It has been shown to reduce the risk of having an NTD by up to 70 percent. Since about 50 percent of pregnancies in the United States are unplanned, it’s important to take folic acid every day, even if you’re not planning to get pregnant. The most common NTDs are spina bifida and anencephaly. *(Insert regional or national statistic as appropriate).*

## **Who needs folic acid?**

All women need folic acid every day. Getting enough folic acid every day, before and during early pregnancy, is an important way to reduce the risk of NTDs. These birth defects occur in the first weeks of fetal development, often before a woman even knows she is pregnant.

Some women may be at higher risk. Not only do Latinas have higher rates of NTD-affected pregnancies, but they also have the lowest awareness/knowledge about folic acid than non-Hispanic women. In addition, Latinas consume less folic acid than non-Hispanic women.

## **Join us to raise awareness about folic acid**

Folic Acid Awareness Week is January 8-14, 2017.

The *(organization)* works to educate consumers and health care providers about the benefits and sources of folic acid. *(Insert information about the work of the organizatio*n). The *(organization)* recommends getting 400 mcg of folic acid daily by taking a multivitamin with folic acid and eating fortified foods, in addition to eating a diet rich in folate. *(Include quote from a contact person/spokesperson from the organization).*

People who are interested in joining the effort should tell their friends and families about folic acid. To join folic acid awareness efforts locally, contact *(name)* at *(phone)* or by e-mail at *(email).* For more information about the *(organization)* or folic acid visit *(link)* or call *(phone number).* Remember to make folic acid part of your healthy lifestyle!