



Folate

Folate is a water-soluble B vitamin that occurs naturally in food. Folic acid is the synthetic form of folate that you will find in supplements and fortified foods, such as breakfast cereals and breads.

Folate helps to produce and maintain new cells. This is especially important during periods of rapid cell division and growth, such as infancy and pregnancy. Folate is also essential to help maintain normal levels of homocysteine, an amino acid which at high levels can be a marker of potential heart disease.

Folate deficiency is especially concerning for pregnant women, as it can cause birth defects, low birth weight babies, and premature birth. Other signs of folate deficiency include: anemia, diarrhea, loss of appetite, weakness, sore tongue, headaches, heart palpitations, irritability, forgetfulness and behavioral disorders.

Caution is needed when taking high doses of folic acid, due to the increased risk of developing a subsequent vitamin B12 deficiency. Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you are taking a folic acid supplement.

Folate can be found in green, leafy vegetables, fruits, and dried beans and peas. Many grain products are also fortified with folic acid, such as breads, cereals, pastas, rice and corn meal. The table below summarizes some common sources of folate and folic acid.

Food	Portion	Micrograms (mcg)
Fortified breakfast cereals	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	400
Beef liver, cooked	3 ounces	185
Black-eyed peas, boiled	3 ounces	105
Spinach, boiled	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	100
Great Northern beans, boiled	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	90
Asparagus, boiled	4 spears	85
White rice, cooked	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	65
Vegetarian baked beans	1 cup	60
Spinach, raw	1 cup	60
Green peas, boiled	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	50
Broccoli, cooked	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	50
Enriched egg noodles, cooked	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	50
Broccoli, raw	2 spears	45
Avocado	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	45
Peanuts, dry roasted	1 ounce	40
Romaine lettuce	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	40

Wheat germ	2 Tbsp.	40
Tomato Juice	6 ounces	35
Orange juice	6 ounces	35
Turnip greens, boiled	½ cup	30
Orange	1 small	30
White bread	1 slice	25
Wheat bread	1 slice	25
Eggs, whole	1 large	25
Cantaloupe	¼ medium	25
Papaya	½ cup	25
Banana	1 medium	20

Recommended Intakes (RDA) for Folate

Group Amount per Day

Males 400 mcg

Females 400 mcg

Pregnancy 600 mcg

Lactation 500 mcg

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