



Folic acid vitamin

If you are a childbearing aged woman and you are thinking about the opportunity of having a baby or you are planning for a first or even a second child, ask your doctor to suggest you a supplement with folic acid vitamin in 0.4 mg pills, to take in daily.



What is folic acid?

Folic acid is a B vitamin (B9 vitamin) and everyone needs it. Our body uses it to make any type of new cells: skin, hair and nails cells and, above all, blood cells.

This vitamin occurs naturally in food as folate and is transformed by our body in folic acid. Folic acid is the synthetic folate product found in vitamin supplements. We usually get enough folic acid through food to renew our cells but there are crucial periods in one's life, such as before pregnancy, when healthy food is not enough.

Nutrition

As usual, and especially before pregnancy, it is advisable to follow a Mediterranean diet rich in fruit and vegetables. Nonetheless, such a diet alone is not enough to give your future child the adequate quantity of folic acid at the beginning of its development in the maternal body. That's why it is so important for the future mother to take a vitamin with folic acid every day.

Why do women of childbearing age need more folic acid?

Women of childbearing age likely to have children should know that the cells of the future baby start multiplying very quickly since conception and they need a higher quantity of

folic acid. Scientific research has clearly shown that when a woman takes folic acid before and during the first trimester of pregnancy, she decreases the risk for the baby of certain birth defects as anencephaly and spina bifida by 50-70%. Risk for other birth defects (including congenital heart anomalies or cleft lip and palate, mainly) as well as decreased intrauterine growth and preterm birth may be perhaps also decreased.

How much folic acid should I take?

The recommended dose is 0.4 mg of folic acid daily.

It is not necessary to assume more, unless you have diabetes, epilepsy or a child with a birth defect in a previous pregnancy. See your doctor for further advice.



For how long can I take folic acid?

There are no problems assuming 0.4mg of folic acid daily and you can continue taking it for many years.

Take folic acid before you get pregnant and until the end of the third month of pregnancy, that is when body organs of your baby are being formed. It is useless to start taking it when you are already pregnant: this does not prevent birth defects (since most organs of your baby have already formed by then). Nonetheless it might be helpful to prevent anemia during pregnancy and perhaps preterm birth.