

FOLIC ACID

You Don't Know What You're Missing!



NATIONAL FOLIC ACID AWARENESS MONTH JANUARY 2006

Waushara County Health Department is joining with the Healthy babies coalition in launching National Folic Acid Awareness Month, January 2006 —*Folic Acid: You Don't Know What You're Missing!* The month will focus on making people aware of the importance of folic acid in their diet and its many lifelong benefits. The theme of National Folic Acid Awareness Month is especially important with the popularity of low-carbohydrate diets. Concerned are that people who are curtailing their intake of carbohydrates such as fortified grains are unaware that they are not getting essential vitamins and minerals necessary for health and well being such as folic acid.

Folic acid is a B-vitamin necessary for proper cell growth. Beginning in 1998, the Food and Drug Administration has required the addition of folic acid to enriched breads, cereals, flours, pastas, rice and other grain products. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), since the introduction of fortification, rates of certain birth defects called neural tube defects (NTDs) have decreased by 26%.

"We know that taking 400 micrograms of folic acid before and during very early pregnancy from a multi-vitamin or fortified foods can help prevent NTDs by up to 70%. To get enough folic acid every day, women should take a daily multi-vitamin and eat fortified grains in addition to a variety of foods as part of a healthy diet.

Emerging research shows that folic acid may reduce the risk of birth defects, such as cleft lip, cleft palate and heart defects, the risk of cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's disease, and colon, cervical and breast cancer. "We encourage everyone to take 400 micrograms of folic acid every day.

For more information about folic acid and National Folic Acid Awareness Month, visit the Web site of the National Council on Folic Acid, www.folicacidinfo.org.

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The National Council on Folic Acid is a partnership of over 80 national organizations, associations and state folic acid councils whose mission is to improve health by promoting the benefits and consumption of folic acid. Managed by the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition through a cooperative agreement with the CDC, NCFCA reaches over 7 million people a year with the folic acid message.

Any questions please call Waushara County health Department 920-787-6590