

Plan Ahead: Do what you can - take folic acid.

Who is at higher risk for having a baby with Spina Bifida?

Women who

- have a child with Spina Bifida
- have Spina Bifida themselves
- have already had a pregnancy affected by any neural tube defect

Many factors affect pregnancy.

Many things can affect a baby, including your family genes and things you may come in contact with during pregnancy.

Taking folic acid cannot guarantee having a healthy baby, but it can help. Taking folic acid before and during early pregnancy reduces the risk of Spina Bifida and other neural tube defects.

What can you do?

Birth defects can happen in any family. Some things are out of your control. But do what you can.

All women of childbearing age should take a vitamin with 400 micrograms (mcg) folic acid every day—even when you're not planning to become pregnant. (This amount is also written as 0.4 milligrams (mg)).

If you are at a higher risk of a Spina Bifida affected pregnancy and you are thinking about becoming pregnant, you need a higher dose of folic acid.

To reduce your risk, you should take 4000 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid by prescription for 1 to 3 months before becoming pregnant. (This amount is also written as 4.0 milligrams (mg)). Please see your health care provider.

Do not take this extra folic acid by taking more multivitamins because too much of some of the other vitamins could harm you and your baby.



What is folic acid?

Folic acid is a B-vitamin that helps build healthy cells. You need to take it every day to help prevent neural tube defects.

Do what you can!

Some of the factors affecting pregnancy are out of your control. Do what you can. Take folic acid before and early in pregnancy to help reduce the risk of neural tube defects in your family.

Plan your pregnancy and visit your health care provider.

Ask about your personal risk of having a baby with a neural tube defect. You may need to get a prescription for folic acid before you try to become pregnant, so plan ahead.

Contact the Spina Bifida Association nearest you:

The mission of the Spina Bifida Association is to promote the prevention of Spina Bifida and to enhance the lives of all affected.



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