

Healthy Eating: Folate¹

Linda B. Bobroff²

Why is folate important?

Folate is one of the B vitamins. Our bodies use folate to make new cells. Folate is especially important for women of childbearing age, pregnant and nursing women, growing children, and older people.

If you don't get enough folate in your diet, you could get anemia. You also could be at higher risk for heart disease, stroke, cancer, or memory problems.

How much folate do I need?

All adults need 400 micrograms of folate a day.

Table 1. Good Sources of Folate

Food	Folate (micrograms)
Fortified cereal, 1 serving	200–700
Spinach, cooked, ½ cup	130
Romaine lettuce, shredded, 1 cup	75
Kidney beans, cooked, ½ cup	65
Orange juice, ¾ cup	45
Peanuts, dry roasted, ½ cup	40



Figure 1. Dark green leafy vegetables like spinach are excellent sources of folate.

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What foods contain folate?

- Dark green leafy vegetables
- Orange juice
- Beans and lentils
- Peanuts
- Fortified cereals and breads

If you do not get enough folate from the foods you eat, you may need to take a supplement. Supplements contain a form of the vitamin called folic acid. Too much folic acid can be harmful, so talk to your doctor first.

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2. Linda B. Bobroff, PhD, RD, LD/N, professor, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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