



COUNTY OF YOLO

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Folic Acid Plays Important Role in Reducing Birth Defects

(Health Department encourages women to get recommended daily dose of folic acid)

(Woodland, CA) – January 6-12, 2013, is National Folic Acid Awareness Week. The Yolo County Health Department encourages all women who are, or could possibly become, pregnant to consume the recommended daily dose of folic acid, even if not planning a pregnancy.

Important growth activity occurs very early in pregnancy, often before many women know they are pregnant. A daily dose of 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid can prevent up to 70% of all neural tube defects, a problem which affects the brain and spine of a baby. As about half of all pregnancies are unplanned, the Yolo County Health Department encourages all women who could possibly become pregnant (planned or unplanned) to get 400 mcg of folic acid every day.

Consuming the recommended daily dose of folic acid can be achieved by taking a daily multivitamin that contains 400mcg of folic acid, or by consuming the recommended serving of breakfast cereal fortified with “100% of the recommended daily value of folic acid.” For a list of cereals with 400 mcg of folic acid, go to: www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/folicacid/cereals.html.

Getting enough folic acid is especially important for Hispanic woman. Data from the Centers for Disease Control indicate that, compared to others, Hispanic women have lower levels of folic acid intake and higher risk for delivery of a baby with a neural tube defect.

“We especially want to bring heightened awareness of the need for folic acid to the Hispanic community in Yolo County,” said Dr. Connie Caldwell, interim Yolo County health officer. “This important health behavior can help assure that healthy babies are born to healthy mothers.”

More information about the importance of folic acid and how to get enough can be obtained by:

- Speaking with a doctor or nurse practitioner
- Visiting: www.folicacidinfo.org
- Contacting Anna Sutton, RN, PHN, Yolo County perinatal services coordinator (530) 666-8649, or for information in Spanish, Rosa Ramirez, community health assistant (800)-794-6517

Women who are already pregnant should take a prenatal vitamin containing iron and folic acid every day to prevent birth defects of the baby’s brain or spine.

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