

Steps to Reduce the Risk of Having a Neural Tube Defect Affected Pregnancy

For Those Who Have Previously Had an Affected Pregnancy

1 Take a daily multivitamin with folic acid.

At least one month before becoming pregnant:

Begin to take 4,000 mcgs (10 times the regular dose) of folic acid daily.

A prescription from your provider is required for this amount.

Outside of that timeframe:

Take 400 mcgs of folic acid daily, even if you are not planning to become pregnant.

2 Plan your next pregnancy.

Make an appointment with your health care provider to discuss your next pregnancy and also consider meeting with a genetic counselor.

3 Eat a healthy diet.

Leafy vegetables, cereal, pasta, flour, beans, or orange juice are good sources of folic acid or folate. However, it is difficult to get enough from food sources alone, which is why a multivitamin is recommended.

About Neural Tube Defects

Neural tube defects (NTDs) occur during the first 30 days of pregnancy, often before people realize they are pregnant. The most common NTDs are Anencephaly, Spina Bifida, and Encephalocele.

The risk of having a pregnancy affected by NTDs is increased amongst those who have previously had an affected pregnancy. Many, but not all, NTDs can be prevented by consuming enough folic acid daily.



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To obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-3650.

This information was adapted from materials by the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), CDC, and the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN).