# 3. Folic Acid

#### MODULE 5

Taking folic acid at least 3 months before you get pregnant and for the entire pregnancy will help prevent neural tube defects such as spina bifida. Your body does not store folic acid so you need to be sure to get enough every day.

It is recommended that all women of childbearing age, (that is from the start of menstruation to the end of menopause):

- eat foods which are good sources of folic acid every day (asparagus, broccoli...).
- take a multi-vitamin containing 0.4mg of folic acid every day (supplements containing more than 1 mg folic acid are not recommended)

The following table features easy tricks to add more folic acid to your food.

#### EASY TRICKS TO ADD FOLIC ACID

### Use spinach



- Try a spinach salad or add spinach to your salads.
- Use it with or in place of lettuce in sandwiches.
- Add spinach to soups, stews, and casseroles.

#### Eat raw vegetables and fruit



- Try raw vegetables such as cauliflower, broccoli, carrots, and green pepper with a dip.
- Add fruit and vegetables to your salads. Tomatoes are good with most salads, and oranges are great with spinach.

### Eat vegetables as often as you can



- Add tomato juice to your stews.
- Try adding tomatoes to casseroles like macaroni and cheese.
- Add an extra can of tomatoes to your favorite chili or spaghetti sauce recipe.

## Drink citrus juices



• Orange juice is always good. Try mixing it with grapefruit or pineapple juice for a change of taste.

### Use wheat germ.



• Sprinkle it on your salads and cereleas. Add it to meat loaves, casseroles, breads, muffins, and cookies.

# Use whole grain flour



• Add whole wheat flour, oatmeal, and wheat germ when you make cookies, fruit crisps, muffins, or fruit loaves.

### Use nuts.



- Snack on peanut butter, peanuts, almonds, and walnuts.
- Add nuts to salads, cookies and muffins.

## Eat beans, peas and lentils.



• Try pea, bean, or lentil soup, bean salads, and canned or homemade bake beans.

Folic acid is destroyed by heat, air, and water. Be sure to keep fruits and vegetables refrigerated. Eat raw fruits and vegetables whenever you can. When you cook fruits and vegetables, use as little water as possible. Try steaming your vegetables instead of boiling them.

