



FOLIC: GET THE FACTS

Contraceptives, even when you use them carefully are only 99% effective. So be extra careful and **take a dose of folic acid supplement every day.**

Taking a folic acid supplement has no side-effects but, if there was a surprise baby, taking folic could **help protect its brain and spine.**

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WHY TAKE FOLIC ACID?

Most women have heard of folic acid but think you should only take it while pregnant. But if you are sexually active and could become pregnant, whether you are planning to or not, you need to take a folic acid supplement every day. This is because folic acid helps your baby's spine and brain develop and reduces the risk of neural tube defects (NTD), like spina bifida.

BUT I'M NOT PLANNING ON HAVING A BABY NOW?

Approximately half of pregnancies right now are unplanned, but a baby's spine and brain start developing in the first weeks of pregnancy. So by the time you realise you are pregnant it may be too late to take folic acid. Taking folic acid before you become pregnant is the only way to make sure you have enough in your blood to help protect your baby.

Taking folic acid daily doesn't mean you are planning a baby, but it does mean that if you do have a baby in the future, you are already helping reduce the risk of NTDs.

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