



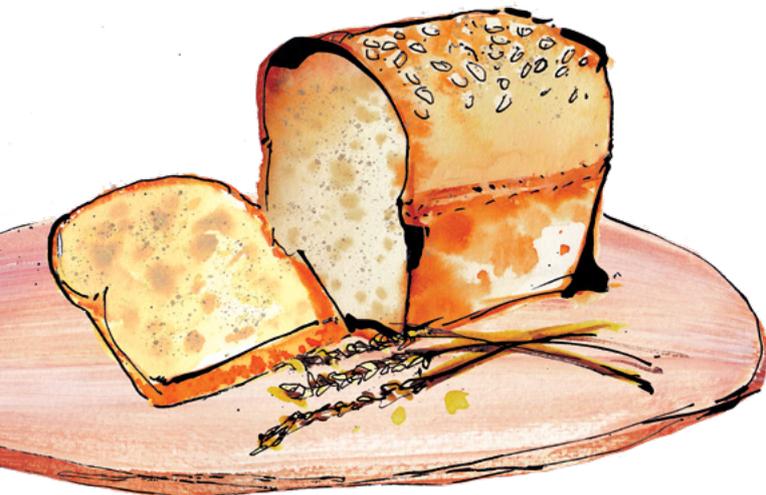
Folate

Top nutrients for women

Why is folate important for women?

Folate helps your body make DNA and red blood cells. It's also needed for cell growth and helping to build and break down protein.

We need folate at every stage of life, but it's particularly important for women just before and in the first three months of pregnancy. During this time, folate helps to reduce the risk of brain and spinal problems in the unborn baby.



Where can I find folate?

Folate is also called 'vitamin B9'. You can find it naturally in foods such as:

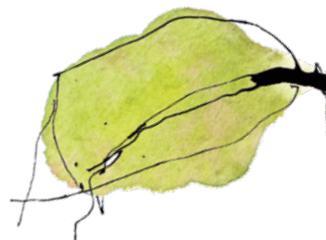
- green leafy vegetables (e.g. spinach, kale)
- Brussels sprouts, broccoli and asparagus
- lentils and chickpeas
- citrus fruits (e.g. oranges)
- nuts and seeds (e.g. hazelnuts, walnuts, sunflower seeds)
- eggs.

Another version of folate – folic acid – is available as a supplement and added to some foods. Generally our body absorbs folic acid better than the folate found naturally in food.

How can I get enough folate?

If you're pregnant or planning to become pregnant, it's recommended you take a folic acid supplement daily.

Take the supplements one month before trying to conceive (or as soon as you find out you're pregnant) until three months into your pregnancy. Some women continue to take the supplement for their whole pregnancy and while breastfeeding.



Choose a supplement that also has B-group vitamins as they can help folate to work properly.

You can also boost your folate intake through food. For example:

- eat two slices of wholegrain bread each day – in Australia all flour, except organic flour, is enriched with folic acid to help people meet their folate needs
- add a handful of broccoli, Brussels sprouts or dark green leafy vegetables to your meals
- sprinkle seeds over your breakfasts and salads (e.g. sunflower seeds, chia seeds, pumpkin seeds).

Some conditions, surgeries and medications can affect your folate levels, or your body's ability to absorb folate, so ask your doctor about what's best for you.

Recipe and meal idea

For a boost of folate, try a lentil salad with leafy greens or this beetroot, fetta and mint salad recipe, available at www.jh.today/salad-jar



Still confused about healthy eating?

To help simplify the complicated, we've created seven more fact sheets on these important nutrients for women:

- Calcium
- Iodine
- Iron
- Magnesium
- Protein
- Vitamin B
- Vitamin D

Get the fact sheets at

jeanhailes.org.au/resources/fact-sheets



 **Jean Hailes
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Disclaimer: This information does not replace medical advice. If you are worried about your health, talk to your doctor or healthcare team.

We write health information for people with diverse backgrounds, experiences and identities. We use the term 'women', but we acknowledge that this term is not inclusive of all people who may use our content.

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