

January 2015 Newsletter

In honor of Birth Defects Prevention Month, we are featuring our...

Folic Acid in Women's Health article

You might wonder why we need to revisit the topic of folic acid use during pregnancy. "Hasn't this issue long since been resolved?" you might ask. Scientifically, the answer is yes, but the importance of folic acid must be kept at the forefront of obstetric practice, because it is easy to take it for granted despite being one of the simplest ways known to reduce the incidence of certain serious birth defects. Folic acid can prevent nearly all cases of folic acid-preventable spina bifida and anencephaly. In addition, some studies associate folic acid supplementation with a reduction in cardiovascular defects and cleft palate as well. Folic acid is the only known vitamin in which supplementation prior to conception and in early pregnancy prevents birth defects. The medical community can play an important role in communicating the importance of preconception folic acid usage to prevent birth defects in women of reproductive age.

FOLIC ACID

Folic acid, also known as (2S)-2-[(4-[(2-amino-4-hydroxypteridin-6-yl)methyl]amino)phenyl]formamido]pentanedioic acid—is a water-soluble, essential B vitamin that is particularly important for deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) synthesis. The human body does not make folic acid and, therefore, relies on dietary folate to maintain adequate concentrations. Fortunately, folic acid is found in a variety of foods or can be taken as a supplement. In societies in which nutrition is suboptimal and supplements are impractical, low-cost dietary interventions can be effective mechanisms to improve health and reduce birth defects.

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Article 2: *What Do You Do? A Guide to Interpretation and Management of Intrapartum FHR Tracings*

Gynecology Course Topic:

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