

Monday, 09 February 2026

Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement

The factsheet is titled "Folic acid and vitamin D guidelines for health professionals" and is published by the HSC Public Health Agency. It is divided into two main sections: "Folic acid and neural tube defects" and "Vitamin D".

Folic acid and neural tube defects

For ALL women who could become pregnant

Advise all women who could become pregnant to take a daily folic acid supplement (400mcg/ug).

Duration: from 12 weeks before conception (or as early as possible after a positive pregnancy test) until at least week 12 of pregnancy, either by:

- prescription

OR

- purchasing it over the counter.

A woman is at higher risk of having a baby with a neural tube defect (NTD) if one or more of the following apply:

- there is a **family history of NTDs** (mother or father's family)
- she has **diabetes**
- she is taking **anti-epileptic drugs*** (for any indication)
- she has **coeliac disease**
- she has **thalassaemia**

*50% of women on anti-epilepsy drugs are prescribed them for non-epileptic conditions.

For women AT HIGHER RISK of having a baby with an NTD

- Prescribe 5 milligrams (mg) daily of folic acid (prescription-only dosage)
- Duration: From 12 weeks before conception or as early as possible after a positive pregnancy test and until at least week 12 of pregnancy.

Vitamin D

Everyone aged five years and over should consider taking a 10 microgram (mcg/ug) supplement of vitamin D during the autumn and winter months (October to March).

A daily vitamin D supplement (10 micrograms) is recommended all year round for the following:

- pregnant and breastfeeding women
- breastfed babies from birth
- babies who get less than 500 ml (about a pint) of infant formula a day
- infants and children aged 1-5
- people aged over 65
- people who have low or no exposure to the sun, for example those who cover their skin for cultural reasons, who are housebound or confined indoors for long periods
- people with dark skin, for example African, Afro-Caribbean and South Asian family origin.

www.publichealth.hsc.ie

Updated guidelines for health professionals on folic acid and vitamin D supplementation.

Details

Format

PDF A4 factsheet

Target group

Health Professionals

Downloads

Attachment

Size

[1. Folic acid and vitamin D factsheet FINAL 0226.pdf](#) 128.7 KB

Tags

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