

## 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/ $\mu$ g).

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/ $\mu$ g) 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 mls (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.