



FOLIC ACID

Patient information leaflet

This leaflet answers some common questions about Folic acid. It does not contain all the available information. It does not take the place of talking to the doctor or pharmacist.

What is Folic acid used for?

Folic acid is a vitamin needed by the body to manufacture red blood cells. An insufficient amount of this vitamin causes diseases known as macrocytic or megaloblastic anaemia. These diseases are most likely to occur in children and pregnant women.

Folic acid may reduce the incidence of neural tube defects (abnormal development of brain and spinal cord) of the baby.

Additional amount of folic acid may be required when a patient takes excessive amounts of alcohol or when a patient suffering from chronic kidney diseases that attack the red blood cells and break them down.

Patients taking medications to treat certain disease, such as seizures or malaria and women taking birth control pills also may require more folic acid than their normal diets provide.

When should it be used?

Usually this medication is taken daily. Your doctor has determined how often and how long you should take this medication.

To reduce the risk of neural tube defects, folic acid supplements at a daily dose of 5mg can be taken during the first twelve weeks of pregnancy, or even when you are preparing your body for pregnancy.

If you are deficient in folic acid, you should feel better quickly, often within 24 hours of taking this vitamin.

How should it be taken?

Folic acid comes in tablets. Patients who cannot swallow tablets may crush them using spoons and mix them with a small amount of food or liquid.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember it. However, if you remember a missed dose at the time you are scheduled to take the next dose, omit the missed dose completely and continue following your regular medication schedule. Do not take two doses at once.

What side effects can this medicine cause? What can I do about them?

- **Rash, itching, and difficulty in breathing may rarely occur.** Contact your doctor.

Other precautions?

- Your doctor will want to monitor your response to this medication and may want to change the amount you are to take. Therefore, keep in touch with your doctor while you are taking it.
- This medication may affect the way the body reacts to certain other drugs. Inform your doctor or pharmacist if you intend to take other medications while on folic acid.
- If you are pregnant and if you are receiving anticoagulant therapy or are deficient in Vitamin B12, please see your doctor before starting folic acid supplementation.
- Do not allow anyone else to take this medication.

Special instructions

- Do not stop taking this medication until your doctor tells you to do so.
- If you are planning a pregnancy, you could eat more folate-rich food (eg. Brans and breakfast cereal fortified with folic acid) and avoid overcooking vegetables.

Storage condition

- Keep this medication in the container it came in and store the container at room temperature and away from direct sunlight.
- Keep this medication out of reach of children.