



Policy and Procedure

Policy Name:	Folic Acid Supplementation		
Effective Date:		Revision Date:	
Department(s)/Site(s):			
Document Owners:			
Approved By:			
Relevant Law/Standard:	California Department of Health Care Services under Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Section 53230. (Requires the review and certification of Primary Care Practitioner (PCP) sites.) Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) All Plan Letter 20-006, Site Reviews: Facility Site Review and Medical Record Review or any superseding APL		

Purpose:

All women planning or capable of pregnancy should get 0.4 to 0.8 mg (400 to 800µg) of folic acid each day, in addition to consuming food with folate from a varied diet, to help prevent neural tube defects (NTDs).

Definition:

Neural Tube Defects: Major birth defects of the baby’s brain (anencephaly) and spine (spina bifida).

Folic Acid (Folate): One of the B vitamins (B9) that is a key factor in the synthesis (the making) of nucleic acid (DNA and RNA). Lack of adequate folic acid during pregnancy was first found to increase the risk for the baby to have a birth defect involving the spinal cord and brain -- a neural tube defect such as spina bifida (meningomyelocele) or anencephaly.

“Capable of Pregnancy”:

USPSTF and WHO categorize women in the age range of 12-49 years as “women who are capable of becoming pregnant”.

The average woman’s reproductive years are between ages 12 and 51. Per Planned Parenthood, pregnancy is possible as soon as a girl begins ovulating or producing eggs. A girl’s first ovulation will happen about 14 days before their first menstrual period. This means that a young girl can become pregnant from vaginal intercourse before her first period. This happens to some females as early as when they are eight years old, or even earlier. Most often, ovulation begins before women turn 20. On average, it first happens when a girl is between 12 and 13.

The last ovulation in a woman’s life is called menopause. Menopause itself is a single point in time 12 months after a woman has her last period, according to the National Institute on Aging (NIA). Menopause can happen as early as when a woman is 40. But the average age for menopause is 51. Per ACOG (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists), by age 45 years, getting pregnant naturally is unlikely for most women; however, it is still possible to become pregnant during the perimenopause stage until there has been 12 months without having a period.

Policy:

All female patients planning or capable of pregnancy will receive recommendation and/or prescription for the supplementation of 0.4 to 0.8 mg (400 to 800µg) folic acid.

Procedure:

1. Assess female patients for menarche or last menstrual period.

2. Recommend and/or prescribe folic acid 0.4 to 0.8 mg (400 to 800µg) supplement to all females planning and/or capable of pregnancy.
3. Document date of menarche or last menstrual period in the Medical Record
4. Document recommendation or declination of folic acid in the Medical Record.

Resources:

Folic Acid for the Prevention of Neural Tube Defects: Preventive Medication, USPSF

<https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/folic-acid-for-the-prevention-of-neural-tube-defects-preventive-medication>

March of Dimes

<https://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/folic-acid.aspx>

First Name Last Name – Title

Date

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