



March of Dimes and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation worked together to build healthier-stronger babies in NM

To ensure healthier- stronger babies in New Mexico, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation awarded the March of Dimes approximately \$1 million over 3 years to implement a Folic Acid program which came to an end 12/31/2015.

The purpose of the New Mexico B9/Folic Acid Initiative is to provide education that encourages women aged 14 to 45 to regularly consume B9/ folic acid to promote overall health, to increase healthy pregnancies and to prevent birth defects.

What is Folic acid (B9)?

Folic acid is a B vitamin (B9). If women of childbearing age take 400 micrograms of folic acid every day before and during early pregnancy, it may help reduce their baby's risk for birth defects of the brain and spine called neural tube defects (NTDs).

Folic acid works only if taken before getting pregnant and during the first few weeks of pregnancy, often before a woman may know she's pregnant. Because nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned, it's important that all women (even if they're not trying to get pregnant) get the right amount of folic acid.

The best way to get enough folic acid is to take a multivitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid before pregnancy and eat healthy foods. Most multivitamins have this amount, but check the label to be sure. You also can get folate naturally from many types of foods, such as green vegetables, strawberries, melons, beans and avocados. However, it may be hard to get the amount you need from food alone.

Once you're pregnant, take a prenatal vitamin with at least 600 micrograms of folic acid. Most healthy women don't need more than 1,000 micrograms of folic acid per day. But if you're at risk of having a baby with a birth defect, your health care provider may want you to take more folic acid.

For additional information please contact the March of Dimes office at 505.933.6423 or <http://www.marchofdimes.org/newmexico/>

