

## **Folic Acid**

Folic Acid is a B vitamin that has been shown to reduce the risk of certain birth defects of the brain and spine, called neural tube defects (e.g., spina bifida, anencephaly). The March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation, the CDC, and the Institute of Medicine recommend that women who could become pregnant consume 400 micrograms daily of folic acid. Given that nearly half of all pregnancies are unintended, taking the recommended dose of folic acid *before* pregnancy increases its benefit. It is critical that all women of childbearing potential know about folic acid and take the recommended daily dose. The *Healthy People 2010* objective is to increase the percentage of non-pregnant women aged 15-44 years who consume 400 micrograms of folic acid on a daily basis to 80 percent. A Gallup study completed in 2005 found that only 33% of women nationally<sup>1</sup> took a daily vitamin of some sort that contained folic acid.

PRAMS data indicate increasing knowledge of the importance of folic acid is helping to prevent some birth defects. While campaigns to increase awareness of this B vitamin appear to be successful across all demographics, non-White and teenage women require constant, continuing outreach on this important supplement.

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<sup>1</sup> Gallup is commissioned by the March of Dimes and only reports numbers at the national level

**Percentage of Mothers Who Have Heard or Read that Taking Folic Acid Can Help Prevent Some Birth Defects by Selected Characteristics, PRAMS, New York State Excluding New York City, 2000-2005**

**Table 12**

<b>Maternal Characteristics</b>	<b>2000</b>		<b>2001</b>		<b>2002</b>		<b>2003</b>		<b>2004</b>		<b>2005</b>	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
<b>TOTAL</b>	92.0	± 2.4	90.5	± 2.4	90.7	± 2.5	90.7	± 2.4	86.4	± 3.2	87.7	± 2.8
<b>RACE</b>												
white	93.6	± 2.3	90.9	± 2.5	91.6	± 2.5	92.7	± 2.3	88.6	± 3.2	91.6	± 2.5
black	77.9	± 11.9	81.7	± 11.8	77.4	± 13.4	69.3	± 14.6	70.0	± 14.1	50.2	± 18.6
other	**		94.9	± 8.6	93.0	± 10.9	95.3	± 7.7	70.0	± 15.0	80.7	± 10.0
<b>AGE</b>												
<20	81.9	± 12.5	72.7	± 14.9	**		**		**		**	
20-24	84.8	± 7.7	87.4	± 7.0	79.3	± 8.9	84.8	± 7.6	76.1	± 10.0	69.9	± 11.0
25-35	93.7	± 2.8	93.2	± 2.6	93.9	± 2.5	94.3	± 2.4	87.9	± 4.1	89.5	± 3.4
>=35	97.4	± 2.6	90.7	± 4.9	98.9	± 1.5	92.7	± 4.7	94.6	± 4.6	95.2	± 3.9
<b>Education</b>												
0-11 years	73.2	± 12.8	72.5	± 12.9	66.2	± 14.9	76.3	± 11.6	63.9	± 12.9	69.2	± 11.9
12 years	89.7	± 4.5	83.2	± 5.8	86.1	± 5.4	85.5	± 6.1	81.9	± 7.5	84.9	± 7.2
>12 years	96.6	± 1.9	96.2	± 1.8	96.9	± 1.6	95.5	± 2.1	93.0	± 2.7	91.6	± 2.9
<b>Marital Status</b>												
Married	95.9	± 1.8	93.8	± 2.1	93.9	± 2.3	95.5	± 1.9	91.1	± 3.0	91.4	± 2.7
Other	80.9	± 7.0	79.1	± 7.3	78.1	± 7.9	75.8	± 7.5	73.9	± 8.0	75.8	± 7.8
<b>Medicaid Status</b>												
On Medicaid	79.5	± 7.4	77.5	± 7.6	74.4	± 7.8	76.7	± 7.3	92.0	± 2.9	92.8	± 2.6
Not on Medicaid	96.0	± 1.8	93.9	± 2.1	95.8	± 1.9	95.5	± 1.9	74.9	± 7.2	75.7	± 6.9

\*\* Number of respondents is less than 30. Estimates based on such a small sample are imprecise and may be biased. Therefore findings in this category are not reported.