

Folate Fact Sheet

FOLATE (also called vitamin B9) is important for keeping your body healthy. It helps your body make new cells, including red blood cells that carry oxygen around your body. Folate is also needed to make DNA, which is the body's instruction system for growth and repair. This is especially important during times of rapid growth, such as pregnancy and childhood.

If you don't get enough folate, you may feel tired, weak, or short of breath. Low folate can also lead to a type of anaemia, where the body does not have enough healthy red blood cells.

Coeliac disease can affect folate levels in two main ways. First, when gluten is eaten, it damages the lining of the small intestine. This is where folate is absorbed, so damage can mean less folate gets into the body. Second, many gluten-free foods are not fortified with folate or other B vitamins. In Australia, regular wheat-based breads and cereals often have added folate, but gluten-free versions usually do not. This means people with coeliac disease need to pay extra attention to their diet.

In Australia the recommended daily intake of folate is:

	INFANTS					
	Breastfed 0-6 months		formulae fed 0-6 months	7-12 months	1-3 years	4-8 years
Folate (ug)	65		65	80	150	200
	BOYS		GIRLS			
	9-13 yrs	14-18 yrs	9-13 yrs	14-18 yrs	Pregnant (14-18 yrs)	Lactating
Folate (ug)	300	400	300	400	600	500
	MEN		WOMEN			
	19-70+ yrs		19-70+ yrs	Pregnant*	Lactating	
Folate (ug)	400		400	600	500	

µg or mcg = microgram (one millionth of a gram)

* Women planning a low risk Neural Tube Defect pregnancy - supplement 0.5mg folic acid/day

* Women with a high risk of Neural Tube Defect pregnancy - supplement 5mg folic acid /day, but cease by the 3rd trimester (always follow your doctor's advice)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

1300 458 836 • Info@coeliac.org.au • coeliac.org.au

Coeliac Australia is not a medical organisation. Persons reading this material should not act solely on it. The advice of a medical practitioner should always be obtained.



Approximate quantities of Folate in foods

Per Average Serving Size (AGHE)	average folate (µg)	Per Average Serving Size	average folate (µg)
Beef liver, cooked, 65g	493	Chickpea, canned, 75g (½ cup)	47
Vegemite / marmite, 5g (1tsp)	202	Green peas, frozen, cooked, ½ cup (75g)	44
Chicken liver pate, 50g	160	Sunflower seeds, 30g (¼ cup)	38
Baked beans 1 cup	125	Black eye beans, 50g	35
Strawberries, 1 cup (150g)	98	Cabbage, boiled, ½ cup (varies: red vs Chinese cabbage)	27-80
Orange, 1 medium (150g)	92	Tomato juice, ½ cup (125ml)	24
Avocado, raw, ½ cup	90	Kidney beans, 75g (½ cup)	20
Peanuts, dry roasted, 30g (¼ cup)	72	Lettuce, 1 cup shredded (75g) (varies: iceberg vs cos)	16-45
Broccoli, cooked, ½ cup (75g)	65	½ Cup cooked brown rice (100g)	17
Asparagus, 65g (4 spears)	62	Pea sprouts, ½ cup (60g)	13
Lentils, 75g (½ cup)	60	Flaxseeds, 30g	12
Commercial orange juice, 125 ml (½ cup)	60	½ Cup cooked white rice (100g)	6
Spinach, cooked, 75g (½ cup)	58	Dried herbs , 1 Tbsp (2.5g)	6
Brussels Sprouts, ½ cup (75g)	50	Fast food French fries, 60g	5

It has been suggested that the addition of extra B-vitamins to the diets of adults with longstanding coeliac disease leads to improvement in anxiety levels, mood and general health and well-being and these researchers recommended periodic additions of folic acid, vitamin B-12 and vitamin B-6. Always discuss any supplementation with your healthcare team.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

1300 458 836 • Info@coeliac.org.au • coeliac.org.au

Coeliac Australia is not a medical organisation. Persons reading this material should not act solely on it. The advice of a medical practitioner should always be obtained.



Usual sources of Folate:

Eating foods naturally rich in folate, such as leafy green vegetables, spinach, broccoli, cabbage, citrus fruits, juices, GF vegemite, legumes, nuts, and seeds, can help maintain good levels and support overall health. To boost B-vitamins in general, aim for a legume food each day. Pulse, legume and lentil pasta's are an easy way to increase folate and other B-vitamins in a gluten free diet.

Impact of Cooking, Storage and Processing on folate.

Folate contained in animal products (e.g. liver) appears to be relatively stable when cooking, unlike folate in plant products (e.g. spinach and cabbage) which can lose up to 40% of their folate content from cooking. Processed grains and flours can lose up to 70% of their folate.

Can you have too much folic acid?

Folate from food is safe and does not cause harm. Too much folic acid from supplements or fortified foods is possible, but uncommon, as extra is usually passed in urine. Very high doses may cause problems, especially for people on anti-seizure medicines, therefore medical advice is important if you are considering supplementation. Low folate can also be linked to poor diet, low B vitamins, alcohol, smoking, and excess coffee.

References:

Nutrient Reference values for Australia and New Zealand. [Folate | Eat For Health](#)
Australian Food Composition Database - Release 3.0

Hallert C, Svensson M, Tholstrup J, Hultberg B. Clinical trial: B vitamins improve health in patients with coeliac disease living on a gluten-free diet. *Aliment Pharmacol Ther.* 2009 Apr 15;29(8):811-6. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2036.2009.03945.x. Epub 2008 Jan 20. PMID: 19154566

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

1300 458 836 • Info@coeliac.org.au • coeliac.org.au

Coeliac Australia is not a medical organisation. Persons reading this material should not act solely on it. The advice of a medical practitioner should always be obtained.

