

Not Knowing the Difference between Folate and Folic Acid can Harm You

By Paul Fassa, *Natural News*

Folic acid and folate are terms used interchangeably as though they are the same. They are not. Folate is a naturally occurring vitamin known as B9. Folate contains all the related isomers needed for B9 to fully benefit health. Folic acid is a synthetically derived molecule created in a lab in the early 1940s. Guess which is beneficial and which is risky.

Folate Sources and Benefits

Folate is present in many foods, especially dark green vegetables. Spinach, kale, broccoli, and other veggies are well bestowed with natural B9. It's also available in whole grains and legumes that you purchase dry. You can even get folate from citrus fruits, melons, and bananas. Eggs are also a good source of folate.

Another excellent folate source that can be used as a supplement is unfortified brewer's yeast. Brewer's yeast flake labels can be confusing, however. Some will list folic acid instead of folate as a key nutrient. They mirror the medical nomenclature confusion just like almost everyone else! The People's Chemist recommends a particular brewer's yeast so you can avoid confusion. [Source (2) below]

The amount of folate usually required is measured in mere micrograms (mcg). That is all that's needed on a daily basis to help metabolize proteins and set our DNA right for protecting us from disease.

As a water soluble B vitamin, whatever isn't needed is passed through the urine. But the flip side of water soluble vitamins is that they are not stored well in the body. Folate is relatively unstable, especially with heat. Some raw veggies, such as romaine lettuce, should be part of our daily diet.

Folate benefits include red blood cell production as well as protection against many forms of cancer, pulmonary diseases, osteoporosis, macular degeneration, depression, and Alzheimer's disease. So B9 or folate deficiency can encourage all those health issues. As more research links health problems to folate depletion from daily folic acid supplement use, some supplement providers are beginning to use folate or compounds containing complete folate in their products.

Folic Acid is Everywhere

The daily need for folate with its relative instability has helped Big Pharma push folic acid into MD's prescription pads and commercial food suppliers' "enriched" denatured grain products, especially breads and cereals.

Maybe folic acid is not too bad all the time. It appears helpful in the short term for expectant mothers to prevent birth defects, but asthma seems more frequent among those children. It is certainly very risky over the long term. The liver can convert the isolate folic acid into the complete spectrum of isomers that constitute folate. But as we age, that ability declines.

Then no matter how much folic acid you take, your folate blood levels decline. The result is a folate deficiency, which invites all those diseases associated with old age mentioned earlier. Folic acid has also been suspected of shuffling DNA around a bit, producing unpredictable results. This is not worth gambling.

Conclusion

Nature knows best when it comes to nutrition. Keep in mind that folic acid was created as foods became less nutritious. That's why folic acid is so prevalent in "enriching" processed foods that have been initially robbed of most of their natural nutrition.

Getting back to basics with organic foods that are whole and complete gets us away from that cycle of attempting to

artificially replace what is removed from food in its natural state. If you feel the need to supplement folate, try brewer's yeast or look for supplements that contain some form of B9 folate instead of folic acid.

Sources for this article include:

(1) Dr. Wright's write up on folate/folic acid confusion <http://tahomaclinicblog.com/folic-acid/>

(2) The People's Chemist tells it like it is <http://thepeopleschemist.com/folic-...>

(3) Wise Geek explains folate while demonstrating label confusion <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-fol...>