

B9- FOLIC ACID

Folic Acid (Vitamin B9) – The Complete
Guide



WHAT IT IS

Folic acid is the **synthetic (supplement) form** of **folate**, a B-vitamin naturally found in food.

Both are crucial for:

1.  **Red blood cell formation**
2.  **DNA and cell growth**
3.  **Preventing birth defects** (especially neural tube defects like spina bifida)
4.  **Heart and brain health**
5. Your body **doesn't store much folate**, so you need a steady daily supply.

Category	Foods (good or excellent sources)
Leafy greens	Spinach, kale, romaine lettuce, broccoli, asparagus, Brussels sprouts
Legumes	Lentils, chickpeas, black beans, kidney beans, peas
Fruit	Oranges, papaya, mango, avocado, strawberries, bananas
Whole grains	Whole wheat bread, brown rice, fortified cereals, quinoa
Nuts & seeds	Sunflower seeds, peanuts, almonds
Other veg	Beets, cauliflower, okra, carrots
Fortified foods	Breakfast cereals, white flour, pasta, rice, nutritional yeast (check the label for “folic acid added”)

TOP FOOD SOURCES OF FOLATE (NATURAL B9)

DEFICIENCY SYMPTOMS

Low folate can cause:

- Fatigue, weakness
- Pale skin
- Shortness of breath
- Mouth sores or swollen tongue
- Poor concentration
- In severe cases:
megaloblastic anaemia
(large, abnormal red blood cells)





IDEAS IDEAS

🥣 Breakfasts

- **Avocado toast** on wholegrain bread + orange juice
- **Fortified cereal** with milk or plant milk + sliced banana
- **Green smoothie** – spinach, kale, orange, banana, and chia seeds

🥗 Lunches

- **Lentil and spinach soup**
- **Chickpea salad** with tomatoes, cucumber, parsley, and lemon dressing
- **Wholegrain pasta** with broccoli, peas, and light garlic oil
- **Vegan burrito** with black beans, brown rice, avocado, and corn



Dinners

- **Grilled salmon** with asparagus and quinoa
- **Chicken and chickpea curry** with spinach
- **Stir-fried tofu and mixed greens** (broccoli, bok choy, edamame)
- **Beetroot and lentil stew** with wholegrain bread

Snacks

- A handful of **sunflower seeds** or **peanuts**
- **Papaya** or **orange slices**
- **Fortified nutritional yeast** sprinkled on popcorn or pasta

FOLATE, B12 AND IRON WORK TOGETHER



Folate helps produce healthy red blood cells.



B12 activates folate (they depend on each other).



Iron carries oxygen in red blood cells.
→ A deficiency in one can hide or worsen problems with another.

TIPS TO BOOST FOLATE LEVELS NATURALLY

01

Eat at least **one leafy green** and **one legume or citrus fruit** daily.

02

Choose **fortified grains** (flour, cereal, pasta) if available.

03

Avoid **overcooking** vegetables – steam or microwave briefly.

04

If you drink alcohol often, **cut back** – alcohol interferes with folate absorption.

05

Combine **folate-rich foods with vitamin C** (e.g. spinach + lemon juice) to improve absorption.

06

For women of childbearing age: **start folic acid before pregnancy**, not after.