

Grains
they're essential!



**Les produits
céréaliers,**
essentiels pour la santé !

Folate – the untold story

What is folate?

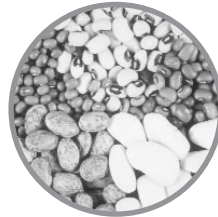
Folate is an essential B vitamin. In our bodies, folate is an important coenzyme – this means that it helps metabolize proteins and amino acids and builds DNA. DNA contains the information for our cells to reproduce and carries the genes that make us who we are.

Folate is also known as folic acid or folacin.

What are good food sources of folate?

Folate is found in many foods. Folate-rich foods include:

- Legumes – e.g. lentils, chickpeas, and kidney beans;
- Dark green vegetables – e.g. cooked spinach, asparagus, broccoli and romaine lettuce;
- Fruits – e.g. avocados and orange juice;
- Grain products – e.g. white bread, enriched pasta and wheat germ.



Why is folate important?

Folate is important for the production of healthy body cells for everyone but it is vital to the growth of unborn babies. Folate helps prevent neural tube defects (NTDs) in infants. The neural tube develops into the spine and brain of a baby. Without enough folate, the neural tube does not close properly resulting in a defect such as spina bifida, one of the more common NTDs. Health professionals recommend that women follow a diet rich in folate and take a folic acid supplement *before* they get pregnant and during pregnancy.

Folate has other benefits. New research shows that higher intakes of folate may reduce the risk of:

- heart disease;
- certain cancers;
- dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Why is folic acid added to some foods?

The mandatory addition of folic acid to certain foods guarantees that we all get more of this essential nutrient. This is especially helpful for pregnant women.

In 1996 Canada's food industry agreed with Health Canada to the voluntary addition of folic acid to white wheat flour, enriched pasta and enriched cornmeal. Folic acid fortification of these food ingredients became mandatory in 1998.



Did you know

Our bodies absorb about half the folate occurring naturally in foods.

Synthetic folic acid which is added to white wheat flour, enriched pasta and enriched cornmeal is almost all absorbed by our bodies.






Synthetic folic acid is also available in vitamin supplements.



Did you know

That since folic acid was added to white wheat flour and enriched pasta there has been a reduction in neural tube defects of about 50% across Canada.

Tips for getting more folate in your diet

-  choose from a variety of white breads and enriched pastas – both are fortified with folic acid
-  select dark green vegetables and orange fruit often
-  look on the ingredient list for enriched wheat flour or enriched flour
-  double up on the folate – try
 - pasta with asparagus or broccoli
 - pita bread with hummus
 - toasted flatbread with guacamole
 - pasta and bean soup
-  experiment with different legumes



Recipes to double up the folate:

Linguini and Broccoli

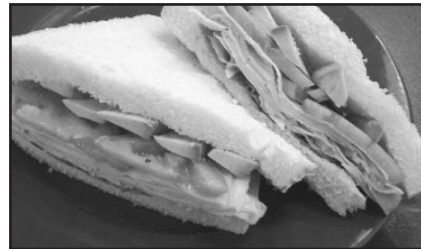


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|------------------|--|
| 1 pkg (375 g) | linguine, uncooked |
| 1 tbsp (15 mL) | olive or vegetable oil |
| 1 | clove garlic, minced |
| 1/2 tsp (2.5 mL) | dried basil leaves |
| 4 cups (1 L) | chopped fresh broccoli |
| 1/2 cup (125 mL) | dry sherry or ready-to-serve chicken broth |
| 1/4 cup (50 mL) | chopped fresh parsley |
| 1/4 tsp (1 mL) | ground black pepper |
| 1 cup (250 mL) | lowfat cottage cheese |
| 1/4 cup (50 mL) | grated Parmesan cheese |

1. Cook linguine according to package directions; drain.
2. Meanwhile, in large skillet, heat oil. Add garlic and basil; cook 1 minute.
3. Add broccoli, sherry, parsley and pepper; cook, stirring constantly, until broccoli is tender.
4. Remove from heat; stir in cottage cheese.
5. Toss hot pasta with broccoli mixture; sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Makes 4 portions
Per portion: Calories 505, Protein 25.0 g, Total Fat 7.9 g, Carbohydrate 78.1, Fibre 6.3 g, Folate 359 µg

Fresh Avocado and Turkey Sandwich



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|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2 | slices of your favorite white bread |
| 1/2 | ripe avocado |
| 4 oz (120 g) | sliced turkey |
| | Leaf lettuce |
| | Sliced tomato |
| | Salt and pepper to taste |

1. Start with two slices of white bread, toasting is optional.
2. On one slice, layer a leaf or two of lettuce, about 4 ounces of sliced turkey, and juicy tomato slices.
3. On the other slice, line up the slices from one-half of a ripe avocado (alternatively smear the avocado).
4. Salt and pepper to your liking.
5. Unite the two sides and dig in.

Makes 1 sandwich
Per sandwich: Calories 512, Protein 41.5 g, Total Fat 21.4 g, Carbohydrate 40.0, Fibre 7.7 g, Folate 188 µg

For more information contact: Baking Association of Canada