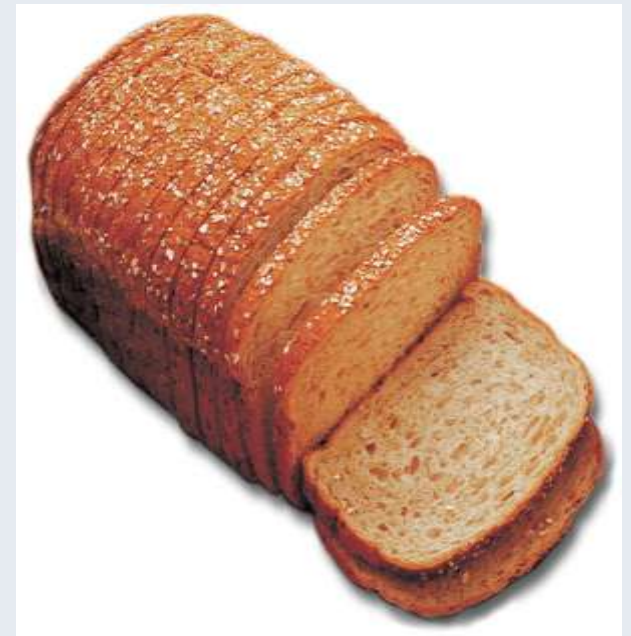


Folate/folic acid and iodine in our food

- Continuation of voluntary fortification with folic acid to reduce the risk of Neural Tube Defect (NTD) affected pregnancies
- Mandatory fortification of bread with iodine



+ separate subsidised folic acid and iodine tablets

Recommendations for folic acid tablets

- Women at low risk of a NTD pregnancy:
 - 0.8 mg (800 µg)/folic acid daily tablet **for at least 4 weeks before and 12 weeks after becoming pregnant**
- Women at high risk of a NTD pregnancy:
 - 5 mg/day folic acid daily tablet for **at least 4 weeks before and 12 weeks after becoming pregnant**

Recommendation for an iodine tablet

- All pregnant and breastfeeding women to take a 150 μg iodine tablet daily to be available in early 2010
- Need to raise awareness of this tablet (in addition to folic acid), its importance, and how Mums-to-be can access it

Subsidised tablets

- The folic acid tablets are available subsidised on prescription or can be purchased over-the-counter at pharmacies
- They are approved under the Medicines Act 1981
- They comply with **Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP)**
- An iodine only tablet should be available in early 2010 in the same way as folic acid

Health Education Resource

- Updated our "Folic Acid and Spina Bifida" (HE4147) pamphlet
- Now incorporates information about an iodine only tablet to coincide with its availability from pharmacies (either on prescription or over-the-counter) in 2010

Other supplements?

- For most pregnant and breastfeeding women there is generally no need to take supplements other than the over-the-counter subsidised folic acid tablets for the **recommended time** and the iodine only tablet when it becomes available
- Seaweed and kelp supplements are not recommended
- Exceptions?
 - iron
 - Vitamin D

Communicating

- Pregnant and breastfeeding women
 - especially Māori and Pacific women
- Know about the folic acid low and high dose tablets
- Look for the iodine only tablet to be available in early 2010
- Look for our updated health education resource in early 2010

For more information

- www.moh.govt.nz
- www.nzfsa.govt.nz
- www.fsanz.govt.nz
 - [P295 = folic acid \(FAR\)](#)
 - [P230 = iodine \(FAR\)](#)