

METHYLFOLATE VS. FOLIC ACID

The world of medical science usually does not take a stand for or against vitamins. There are, however, some notable exceptions; several vitamins are recommended and even prescribed by physicians. Even among those, few are with the degree of importance attached to Folic Acid.

WHAT IS FOLIC ACID?

Folic Acid is also known as vitamin B9 and is part of the B-Complex family. Folic Acid is the synthetic form of Folate and is found in fortified foods and many nutritional supplements. All the B vitamins are water-soluble, which means that the body cannot store a supply of them and constant supplementation is required to retain adequate levels. B vitamins help convert food into glucose, and fat into usable protein. They also affect the health of the liver, hair, skin and eyes. Additionally, B vitamins are known to have a positive effect on the nervous system and in the production of DNA and RNA. Therefore, Folic Acid, along with other essential B-complex vitamins, is vital in maintaining physical, emotional and mental health. This importance escalates at times of rapid cellular growth.

THE MAGNITUDE OF METHYLFOLATE

While Folic Acid is a crucial supplement that must be taken, there are many individuals with a genetic mutation, called the MTHFR mutation, who cannot absorb synthetic folic acid. Therefore, they must supplement with a natural form of folate which is body ready and does not have to be converted. The problem is that most people who have the MTHFR mutation don't even know it, putting themselves and their babies at risk by not getting adequate amounts of this necessary nutrient. Therefore, due to the risks that can be associated with taking folic acid, it has been shown that taking Methylfolate is a much safer and more effective route. By taking Methylfolate, you don't have to worry if your body is actually reaping the benefits! Most supplements on the market contain folic acid simply because Methylfolate is a high-end, more expensive ingredient. That being said, you get what you pay for with Methylfolate since it's body ready and highly absorbable.

WHO NEEDS THIS NUTRIENT?

In truth, everyone needs this essential nutrient. The difference is how much one needs to imbibe for proper health. A deficiency in Folic Acid can cause poor growth, decreased mental function, moodiness, diarrhea and breathlessness. However, it is during the prenatal period that the consequences of Folic Acid deficiency are most notable. Vitamin B9 plays a central role in the formation and development of the nervous system. This happens in the earliest stages of prenatal development. Any malformation at this time has a marked effect on later growth and can cause severe health issues. Often, a Folic Acid deficiency can cause spina bifida, other neural tube defects, brain damage, or cleft palate. Conversely, obtaining adequate levels can reduce the likelihood of these conditions by over 70%. For this reason, doctors recommend that all women take 400 mcg of Folic Acid on a daily basis and even more during pregnancy. Some studies also showed a lower risk of autism, reduced risk of language delay, and lower levels of emotional issues when supplemental levels were sufficient during this crucial time.

HOW TO TAKE IT

Most grain and cereal products in the United States are fortified with Folic Acid, and many foods contain folate. However, it is important to note that acquiring Folic Acid from food is not enough for proper prenatal development. Therefore, all women of childbearing age should supplement, preferably with the absorbable form of Methylfolate. Doctors will also sometimes prescribe Folic Acid for a variety of other reasons. It is beneficial to take Folic Acid in combination with other B vitamins as they each affect the absorption and proper usage of the other.

Part of the B-complex family, folic acid has many positive benefits on nervous system function and fetal development. Supplementing with the most bioactive source, Methylfolate, ensures optimal absorption.



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