FOLIC ACID PROPHYLACTIC THERAPY
FOR WOMEN OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Folic acid is vital to the early development of the fetal brain and spinal cord. Brain and spinal cord development occur by the 5th week of pregnancy. This is only one week after the menstrual period has been missed. Some women will not yet know they are pregnant. Inadequate folic acid levels can lead to a defect in the developing fetal brain and spinal cord. This is called a neural tube defect. All women of reproductive age should consume 400mcg (0.4 mg) of folic acid daily in order to be prepared should a pregnancy occur. Folic acid prior to pregnancy is an important component of preconception care.

Supplementation with folic acid is recommended because it is difficult to eat a diet that contains adequate amounts of folic acid. Today, enriched grain products such as flour, cereal, bread, rice and pasta are fortified with folic acid. Other sources of folic acid include dark green leafy vegetables, dried beans, legumes oranges, and orange juice. Nevertheless supplementation is recommended.

SUBJECTIVE

No medical history of intolerance to multivitamins with folic acid
Negative obstetric history for a child with spina bifida or anencephaly
Not currently taking a daily multivitamin with folic acid

OBJECTIVE

Woman of reproductive age (approximately 10 to 44 years of age)

ASSESSMENT

Client is appropriate for supplementation with a daily multivitamin with 400 mcg of folic acid.

PLAN

Educate the client about the importance of folic acid.
If the client already takes a multivitamin with folic acid, assure that she understands that she needs only one a day. She should complete what she has before beginning what is given to her at the clinic.
If there is an obstetric history of neural tube defects, consult for the proper dosage of folic acid. Women who have given birth to a child with a neural tube defect require higher doses of folic acid.
Give the client a supply of multivitamins with folic acid with the instructions to take one tablet orally daily.
Client may take the supplement with food if she has nausea when taking it on an empty stomach.
Provide client with any written materials you may have regarding folic acid.
The return appointment is scheduled as needed.

REFERENCES

http://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/folate.asp

www.cdc.gov/Features/FolicAcid/

www.marchofdimes.com