

September 14, 2010
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TWO THIRDS OF U.S. WOMEN DON'T USE RECOMMENDED FOLIC ACID VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTS

San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) Go Folic! Campaign addresses this issue in the Chinese community

San Francisco, CA – The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force recommend that all women of reproductive age take a daily multivitamin with 400 to 800 mcg of folic acid. In spite of this, only one-third of U.S. women do so. In conjunction with this month's Autumn Moon Festival activities, the DPH Go Folic! Women's Nutrition Project is raising awareness of this issue in the San Francisco Chinese community. The campaign includes the following events:

- **Lantern Contest, August 26 – September 19, 2010:** The Go Folic! Program is working with Nam Kue School and Central Chinese High School in America to sponsor a lantern-making contest. Students of these two schools will work with their family to decorate lanterns featuring folate-rich foods. Members of the public will be invited to judge the entries online. Winners will receive cash prizes and will be recognized at the Chinatown Autumn Moon Festival on Sunday, September 19th at 3:30 PM on the main stage area on Washington Street.
- **Information Booth & Free Vitamin Distribution:** The Go Folic! Project will have a booth at the Chinatown Autumn Moon Festival. Women between the ages of 14 to 44 will be able to get a 3-month supply of free multivitamins with 400 mcg of folic acid. These vitamins are high quality and have been manufactured in the United States.

The idea of "nurturing the embryo" is important during pregnancy in the Chinese community. According to Shivaun Nestor, GoFolic! Project Coordinator, "Folic acid — a B vitamin is necessary for cell division and growth, playing a crucial role in women's health." She adds, "Getting adequate folic acid has been shown to support heart health and may decrease a woman's risk for breast, cervical and colon cancer." In addition, folic acid may be viewed as beauty from the inside out because it improves the quality of a woman's hair, nails and skin.

According to the CDC and March of Dimes, taking folic acid before pregnancy reduces the risk of having a baby with a neural tube defect by 70%. A recent study by the National Institutes of Health discovered that taking folic acid a year before conception may reduce the risk of pre-term (early) labor.

Even with a healthy diet, it's difficult to get the suggested amount of folic acid from food alone. To work effectively, folic acid should be consumed with other B-vitamins. In addition, 50% of all pregnancies in the U.S. are unplanned or accidental; one-half of these pregnancies occur while women are using birth control. For these reasons, health experts advise all women take a multivitamin.

The public can cast their votes for the winning Lantern Contest entries by going to www.gofolic.org/autumnmoon. For more information about the contest, please contact Mei Lin Huang at 415.575-5678 or email Mei.Lin.Huang@sfdph.org. For more information about the Go Folic! Women's Nutrition Project, please contact Shivaun Nestor at 415.575.5677 or via email at Shivaun.Nestor@sfdph.org.

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The Go Folic! Women's Nutrition Project is a project of the San Francisco Department of Public Health's Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Section (MCAH). Our mission is to promote the health and well being of women of childbearing age, infants, children and adolescents who are at increased risk of adverse health outcomes by virtue of financial, language or cultural barriers. Go Folic! is dedicated to improving the health of San Francisco Women through vitamin distribution and education. The Go Folic! Project is made possible by a grant from the Vitamin Cases Consumer Settlement Fund. Created as a result of an antitrust class action, one of the purposes of the Fund is to improve the health and nutrition of California consumers.