



**GO FOLIC! Women's
Nutrition Project**
www.gofolic.org

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Barbara Garcia, M.P.A., Director
Ed Lee, Mayor

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**GOING FOLIC! DURING NATIONAL FOLIC AWARENESS
WEEK AND BEYOND - A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION
THAT'S EASY TO KEEP!**

How many of us keep our New Year's Resolutions? More often than not, energetic promises are broken as the year wears on and life catches up with our better intentions. However, according to Shivaun Nestor, Go Folic! Project Coordinator for the San Francisco Department of Public Health, "Deciding to get more folic acid this year is one resolution that is easy to keep, either by taking a daily multivitamin with 400 mcg of folic acid or by eating a bowl of cereal that's been fortified with 400 mcg of folic acid every morning."

And what better time to make this resolution than during National Folic Acid Awareness Week, designated to increase awareness of the importance of folic acid to women? This year DPH is joining forces with the National Council on Folic Acid (folicacidinfo.org) and the State's Everywoman California (everywomancalifornia.org) to get more folic acid in their diet. According to Dr. Ron Chapman, director of the California Department of Public Health, women, particularly Latina women, can easily and significantly reduce severe birth defects by adding 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid to their diet every day.

"Prevention is the key strategy to reducing one of the most common birth defects," said Dr. Chapman. "Consuming a B vitamin called folic acid is an inexpensive and effective way to achieve this and is at the forefront of our efforts to improve birth outcomes."

CDPH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that all women of childbearing age take 400 mcg of folic acid daily, even if they have no immediate plans to become pregnant. This is because approximately 45 percent of births in California are unplanned, and serious birth defects of the brain or spinal cord called neural tube defects (NTDs) develop before many women know that they are pregnant and begin prenatal care. NTDs, which are the most common birth defects in California, can result in serious physical and learning disabilities as well as death.

Through the Go Folic! network of community clinics, the San Francisco Department of Public Health offers women, ages 14-54, who reside in San Francisco, a free year's supply of multivitamins with folic acid. To learn more, call the local MCAH hotline 1-800-300-9950 or visit the Go Folic! website at www.gofolic.org/free.html. For women outside of the city, the California Department of Public Health has teamed up with Raley's and SaveMart stores to promote folic acid use through special offers and displays.