



## Food Sources: Folate

Folate is a water-soluble B vitamin that occurs naturally in many foods, while folic acid is the synthetic version often added to supplements and fortified products. Naturally rich food sources include dark leafy greens (like spinach and kale), citrus fruits, beans, and lentils.

This nutrient plays a vital role in producing and maintaining new cells, which makes it especially important during times of rapid growth, such as pregnancy and infancy. Folate is required for making DNA and helps protect against DNA damage that could contribute to cancer risk. It also supports the production of healthy red blood cells, helping to prevent anemia. Another key role of folate is in the metabolism of homocysteine, an amino acid that, when elevated, has been linked to cardiovascular disease, cognitive decline, and mood disorders.

The body uses natural folate and synthetic folic acid differently, so dietary recommendations are listed as dietary folate equivalents (DFE). Some people with genetic differences, such as variants in the MTHFR gene, may process natural food sources of folate more effectively than folic acid. If you're unsure about your folate intake or supplementation needs, check with a functional medicine provider.

Recommended Daily Folate Intake (DFE):

- Adults (19+): 400 mcg
- Pregnancy: 600 mcg
- Lactation: 500 mcg

Folate Content in Foods (per serving):

- Beef liver, 3 oz (organic, grass-fed): 215 mcg
- Lentils, ½ cup cooked: 180 mcg

- Pinto beans, ½ cup: 145 mcg
- Garbanzo beans, ½ cup: 140 mcg
- Asparagus, 6 spears: 134 mcg
- Spinach, ½ cup: 130 mcg
- Black-eyed peas, ½ cup: 105 mcg
- Fortified cereal (25% DV), 1 serving: 100 mcg
- Brussels sprouts, ½ cup: 80 mcg
- Beets, ½ cup: 68 mcg
- Romaine lettuce, 1 cup: 64 mcg
- Avocado, ½ cup: 60 mcg
- Broccoli, ½ cup: 50–60 mcg
- Orange, 1 medium: 40 mcg