

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Inflammatory Bowel Disease Center

Medication Information Sheet for Folic Acid

Brand Name: Many brand names are available.

Generic Name: Folic acid or folate

Drug Class: Vitamins/Hematinics

What does this supplement do?

Folic acid is one of the B vitamins and is prescribed when a patient is taking sulfasalazine (Azulfidine), Methotrexate (MTX) or is anemic. Sulfasalazine can prevent you from absorbing all the folate (natural form of folic acid found in beans, citrus fruits and leafy green vegetables) in your food. Methotrexate interferes with folate metabolism (how it is used by your body).

Folic acid is necessary to the development of red blood cells, which carry oxygen around the body. Dietary folic acid intake has also been shown to decrease the risk of cancer of the colon and rectum. It is often prescribed to pregnant women as folic acid also helps to prevent the formation of certain birth defects.

Possible Side Effects:

This supplement is very well tolerated and side effects are uncommon. If you have problems with less serious side effects, please talk with your doctor.

- Nausea
- Bloating
- Flatulence
- Bitter taste

Call your doctor *immediately* if you have any of these side effects:

- Hives/Rash
- Difficulty breathing
- Swelling of the lips, tongue or face

Signs of folic acid deficiency are subtle but can include:

- Diarrhea
- Weight loss
- Decreased appetite
- Feelings of weakness
- Sore tongue
- Headache
- Heart palpitations
- Irritability

Dosage and Administration:

- Folic acid dosage _____
- This supplement may be taken with food
- If you miss a dose, wait and take your next regular dose