

Registration Slip for FINE (continued)

For any children you have who are under 18 years of age (or who are over 18 years of age but under your guardianship) please complete the table below. They will be included on the register as family members.

Child's full name	male/female	D.O.B.

Please register me with FINE. I understand I will be sent free newsletters or updates related to folate and/or neural tube defects. If I wish to withdraw from FINE, I can do so at any time.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please send completed Registration Slip to:
FINE
Spina Bifida Foundation Victoria
Level 4, Ross House
247 Flinders Lane
Melbourne Vic 3000

Please cut here

Why join FINE?

(Folate Information NEtwork)

If you register with FINE we can send you free newsletters that can help you keep up to date. Newsletters contain the latest information about folate and other factors which may help babies of the future develop free of spina bifida, anencephaly, and other neural tube defects. Newsletters are generally produced twice per year.

It doesn't cost anything to join FINE.

Who can join FINE?

- Anyone who has spina bifida or another neural tube defect.
- Anyone with any family history of spina bifida, anencephaly or another neural tube defect.
- Anyone whose partner has spina bifida or any family history of spina bifida, anencephaly or another neural tube defect.

How to join FINE

It's easy. Simply do one of the following:

- Fill in the Registration Slip on this pamphlet and post it to the address shown on the Registration Slip
- or
- Email your details to info@sbfv.org.au
- or
- Ring the Spina Bifida Foundation Victoria on (03) 9663 0075

This pamphlet is produced by FINE (Folate Information NEtwork).

FINE provides information for individuals and their families in Victoria who have experienced spina bifida, anencephaly or other neural tube defects.

FINE is a service of the Spina Bifida
Foundation Victoria

For more information ...

Phone FINE Project Officer on (03) 9663 0075

or write to:

FINE
Spina Bifida Foundation Victoria
Level 4, Ross House
247 Flinders Lane
Melbourne 3000

Or visit the FINE web site at

www.sbfv.org.au



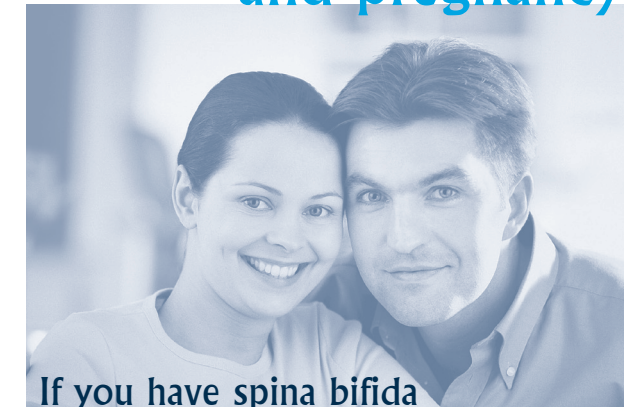
Proudly supported by



spina bifida,
anencephaly,
encephalocele,

you

and pregnancy



If you have spina bifida

OR

If someone in your family has been
affected by a neural tube defect,

then this pamphlet is for you.

4 mg folic acid daily
can help

What are neural tube defects?

- The 'neural tube' is a tube-shaped structure which forms to enclose the spinal cord and brain. This occurs during the early stages of a baby's development in the womb.
- When the neural tube does not completely close it is known as a neural tube defect.
- **Spina bifida & anencephaly** are the most common neural tube defects.
- In **spina bifida** the spinal cord is poorly formed causing problems that can be as mild as reduced feeling or weakness in the legs, to severe problems such as no feeling in the legs, no control of bowel or bladder action.
- In **anencephaly** the brain does not form and these babies are stillborn or die soon after birth.

Who is at increased risk of having a baby with a neural tube defect?

1. Men and women with a neural tube defect such as spina bifida
2. Couples who have already had a pregnancy affected with a neural tube defect
3. Men and women who have a blood relative with, or family history of, a neural tube defect
4. Women taking medicine for epilepsy or seizures

What are the risk figures?

In Australia approximately 1/800 pregnancies has a neural tube defect.

If you have had one child or pregnancy with a neural tube defect	The risk is 1 in 50
If you have had two children or pregnancies with neural tube defects	The risk is 1 in 10
If you or your partner have a neural tube defect	The risk is 1 in 25
If you or your partner have had a blood relative with a neural tube defect	The risk is 1 in 100

Do you fit into any of the above groups?

Are you able to have a baby?

If yes, to reduce the likelihood of having a baby with a neural tube defect, it is recommended that you take 4mg of folic acid (or folate) daily if you could possibly become pregnant. This amount is 10 times more than necessary for most women.

Supplements of high dose folic acid are available from chemists on request. Usually these supplements are 5mg tablets which is a safe amount to take. Start at least one month before you get pregnant and continue for three months more after you are pregnant.



What is folate or folic acid?

Folate is a group B Vitamin that can reduce your chances of having a baby with a neural tube defect by 70%. Folate is found naturally in certain foods. Folic acid is the man-made form of this vitamin.

Will folate ensure that my baby will not have a neural tube defect?

Folate cannot prevent all neural tube defects, but it reduces the risk by up to 70%.

Will I reduce my chances further if I take more than 4mg of folic acid daily?

Taking more than 4mg has not been shown to have any added benefits. You may like to talk to your doctor about it.

Why don't I need to take folic acid tablets throughout the pregnancy?

The extra folic acid is needed only when the spinal column of the baby is forming and this happens within the first 4 - 6 weeks of pregnancy.

Can I get the required amount of folate through my food?

Folate is found in many foods, fruits and leafy green vegetables. Some good sources of folate are lentils, chickpeas, oranges, spinach, broccoli, beans and cereals. Folate is often lost when preparing food and you would need huge amounts to make up the 4mg needed to prevent neural tube defects (for example, about 85 oranges a day!). Even if you eat food which has been fortified with folic acid you will almost certainly need a supplement to obtain the required amount.

Is folate useful if I am already pregnant?

Folate is useful for everyone's good health, but the extra 4mg of folic acid only needs to be taken at least 1 month before pregnancy and for the first 3 months during pregnancy for it to help prevent a neural tube defect. Speak to your doctor or a genetic counsellor about your situation.

What should men do?

Men who have spina bifida or a family history of neural tube defects should make sure that any female partner knows about their increased risk and the importance of folate in prevention.

Why don't men take folate too?

To prevent neural tube defects it is important that the mother has the right amounts of folic acid in her body because she is the one carrying the baby and needs to pass the folic acid to the unborn baby as it develops.

Are there any tests for spina bifida or other neural tube defects during pregnancy?

Yes. Ultrasound by a doctor who has specialised in fetal ultrasound can detect anencephaly from around 11 weeks and most cases of spina bifida from around 18 weeks.

Folate Information Network (FINE)

You can register with FINE to receive free newsletters twice a year. FINE News makes it easy to keep up to date with the latest information about folate and other factors which may help babies of the future develop free of spina bifida, anencephaly and other neural tube defects.

Registration Slip for FINE (Folate Information Network)

Your full name: _____

Postal Address: _____

Phone: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Please indicate which of the following statements is most suited to you.

- I have spina bifida and am over 18 years of age.
- I am the parent of a child who has spina bifida. His/her full name is _____, born on _____
- I am the parent of a baby/child who had spina bifida, anencephaly or another neural tube defect, but is no longer alive.
- I have previously had a pregnancy loss where the baby had spina bifida, anencephaly or another neural tube defect.
- I am related to a person who has/had spina bifida or another neural tube defect. Please specify relationship (eg. sister, brother, first cousin etc): _____
- My partner has spina bifida or some family history of a neural tube defect.
- My partner has previously had a pregnancy loss where the baby had a neural tube defect.

Registration slip continues overleaf