World Folic Acid Awareness Week

From January 1st to 8th 2025

Social Media Toolkit



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR SPINA BIFIDA AND HYDROCEPHALUS



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World Folic Acid Awareness Week

Every January, the International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus works with its member organisations, partners and supporters to promote the World Folic Acid Awareness Week as part of the IF Global Prevention Initiative (IFGPI) as a **prevention campaign** to raise awareness about preventable Neural Tube Defects (NTDs) such as Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus through folic acid supplements, staple foods fortified with folic acid or foods rich in folate, the natural form of folic acid.

We welcome you to join IF in raising awareness on this important global public health concern, from **January 1st to 8th 2025**. You are especially invited on **January 7** for the Global Webinar on **Prevention of Neural Tube Defects: Leaving no one Behind**, starting at **3PM CET (Brussels timezone) in Zoom.**

Join us in sharing key information about folic acid and prevention during this important week, and share folic acid knowledge and information through your social media channels and with friends, colleagues and families. Encourage them to spread folic acid awareness too!

The message is simple: **Pre-conceptional folic acid is key for the prevention of most NTDs.**

World Folic Acid Awareness Week



The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that during pregnancy, the body requires more micronutrients such as vitamin A, iron, iodine and folate.

These are essentials for normal physiological function, growth, and development. Deficiencies of micronutrients are particularly common during pregnancy, due to increased nutrient requirements of the mother and developing baby. These deficiencies can negatively impact both the mother and the health of the baby.

The WHO recommends taking a daily folic acid supplementation of 400mcg for at least 12 weeks before conception*

*Source: WHO, Periconceptional folic acid supplementation to prevent neural tube defects (last retrieved Nov 11 2024)

What is Folic Acid?

Folic acid is an important B vitamin (vitamin B9), which plays a significant role in the growth and development of the cells in our body and in the formation of DNA.

Folic acid is essential to creating the very building blocks of life, which is why it becomes particularly important in the very early days of pregnancy when cell division is at its most rapid. Because of this, extra folic acid both before conception and during early pregnancy to support the development of their babies is needed.

A lack of folic acid can increase the risk of babies developing birth defects of the brain and spine called Neural Tube Defects (NTDs), such as Spina Bifida. NTDs may occur when the brain and spine fail to form properly during the first 28 days of pregnancy, before many women even realises that they are pregnant*.

*Source: IFGPI, Folic Acid Leaflet: What every woman needs to know before becoming pregnant, 2020.

Global Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Community Committed to Support WHO Member States in The Implementation of Safe and Effective Food Fortification

The International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (IF) welcomes and celebrates the adoption of the WHA 76.19 Resolution “Accelerating efforts for preventing micronutrient deficiencies and their consequences, including spina bifida and other neural tube defects, through safe and effective food fortification” (*accepted on May 29 2023*) .

With this new WHA Resolution, WHO Member States across the world, acknowledge a long-standing concern expressed by IF, our members and partners, that isolated national actions to reduce the risk of Neural Tube Defects including Spina Bifida developing during pregnancy are woefully inadequate, resulting in an avoidably high prevalence worldwide

The adoption of the resolution is a tremendous occasion for the global Spina Bifida community and all those stakeholders and policy makers who have worked with IF to make this action a reality.

Join the World Folic Acid Awareness Week Webinar, Let's Thrive Impact! on January 7th, 2025



IF is driven by its mission to decrease the birth prevalence of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus through primary prevention measures and to improve the quality of life for those living with these disabilities.

Moreover, this year IF wants to take the opportunity to transform the way the world tackles the global challenge of malnutrition and prevention of Neural Tube Defects. For this occasion, IF is organising the event ***Prevention of Neural Tube Defects: Leaving no one Behind*** including speakers from all over the world sharing their perspectives on how we can build a smarter, stronger, and healthier future for all.

For more information about the WFAAW25 webinar, visit the IF website here

Take Part in the WFAAW 2025 Social Media Awareness Raising Campaign

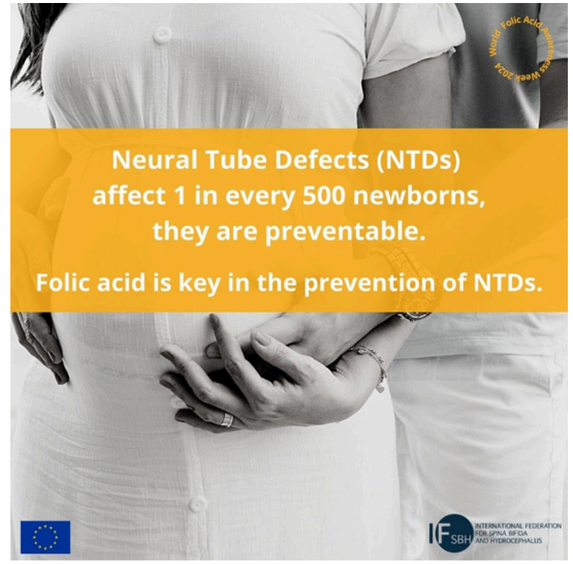
Join IF during the WFAAW 2025 to raise awareness on the important topic of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus prevention.

IF developed a social media toolkit for you to share key messages across your social media channels and network.

Prevention is a combined effort.



Together with you we can raise awareness all around the world on the importance of folic acid for the prevention of neural tube defects!





What does this toolkit contain?

Within this toolkit, you will find links, hashtags, and infographics to download, and suggested messages to share throughout World Folic Acid Awareness Week (WFAAW) 2025, taking place from January 1st - 8th.

Support IF in spreading awareness about folic acid, and the need to improve global prevention of Neural Tube Defects (NTDs), in particular Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus.

Every share is an opportunity to make a real difference!

Would you like to contribute in a different way?
IF would like to hear from you!

For more information on the WFAAW, please contact the IF team at info@ifglobal.org

Join IF, its members and partners on this important week and opportunity to raise awareness worldwide, you can actively contribute by:

- Sharing this toolkit with colleagues, partners and friends to show your support.
- Sharing the daily posts from the IF social media channels (we will be sharing daily posters including lots of important information about Folic Acid)
- Joining IF's social media channels, comment on our posts and tag us when you do.
- Using the suggested #'s like #WFAAW25 in your posts
- Sharing your folic acid/ prevention related stories with us
- Sharing any videos, photos and posters from your own awareness activities
- Using the WFAAW banner, and share the links to our other online resources listed in this toolkit.
- Disseminating and participating in the WFAAW Webinar 2025.

"Each one of us can make a difference, together we can make change!"

SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

In order to engage with us for the WFAAW campaign, follow our social media channels. IF will publish messages and share your WFAAW events and activities through our different channels.



Hashtags:
#WFAAW25
#FolicAcid
#Prevention
#WHA76.19

Follow IF:

@ifsbh

@ifsbh

@international-federation-for-spina-bifida-and-hydrocephalus

@ifsbh

Accounts to follow:

@WHO @EU_Health @FFINetwork @Buhler_Group @NutritionIntl @MNForum @Nouryon @HellenKellerIntl @GAINalliance @muehlenchemie @SternVitamin @WFP @UNICEF @GAPSBIF

Key messages

Feel free to adapt, use and share the example messages below and spread the word on **#WFAAW25** and do not forget to tag **IF through @ifsbh**

Folic acid is essential for the proper closing of the neural tube of a foetus within 28 days after conception. #FolicAcid #WFAAW25 #Prevention #WHA76.19

It is impossible to get sufficient amount of folate from food. #FolicAcid supplements or fortified food with folic acid are essential. #WFAAW25 #Prevention #WHA76.19

On average 1 in 500 newborns are affected by #NTDs. Most NTDs, such as #SpinaBifida, are preventable thanks to #FolicAcid and #FoodFortification. #WFAAW25 #Prevention #WHA76.19

The World Health Organisation recommends taking a daily #FolicAcid supplementation of 400mcg for at least 12 weeks before conception. #WFAAW25 #Prevention #WHA76.19

A balanced and nutritious diet benefit to growth and development of the baby and decrease the risk of many #BirthDefects. #FolicAcid #WFAAW25 #Prevention #WHA76.19

Key messages

During #pregnancy, the body requires more micronutrients such as vitamin A, iron, iodine and folate. Deficiencies can impact both the mother and the health of the baby. #FolicAcid #WFAAW25 #Prevention #WHA76.19

Helping flour #fortification realize its full potential-the ability to eliminate vitamin and mineral deficiencies--requires active involvement of public-private-civic partnerships. #FolicAcid #WFAAW25 #WHA76.19

Although a healthy diet would normally provide you with folate, it is not sufficient alone to get the recommended #FolicAcid intake to support and protect a pregnancy. The @WHO recommends taking 400mcg folic acid daily to prevent an NTD-affected pregnancy. #WFAAW25 #Prevention #WHA76.19

While #NTDs are multifaceted conditions that can occur for several reasons, since 1991, it has been scientifically established that folate insufficiency is a known risk factor for NTDs. #WFAAW25 #Prevention #WHA76.19

Mandatory fortification of food with #FolicAcid is a cost-effective measure to reduce this risk, and it requires no change in diet or behaviour. #WFAAW25 #Prevention #WHA76.19

Key messages

Fortification of foods with #FolicAcid is a powerful and established food systems intervention with a proven track record of virtually eliminating the vitamin and mineral deficiencies that can cause #NTDs. #WFAAW25 #Prevention #FoodFortification #WHA76.19

Vitamins like folate and its man-made form, #FolicAcid, have the power to unlock—or undo—human potential. No matter where we live and no matter what food is on our plate, we all depend on the same core set of nutrients to achieve a healthy life. #WFAAW25 #Prevention #WHA76.19

Large-scale #FoodFortification with nutrients like #FolicAcid is key to achieving a healthier, more equitable food system. When even the poorest households have access to a baseline of essential vitamins and minerals, well-being improves and societies become more resilient in times of crisis. #WFAAW25 #Prevention #WHA76.19

Research and evidence show that fortifying food with #FolicAcid—the synthetic form of folate—is a successful intervention that improves folate levels for women of reproductive age before they get pregnant to a level that provides the maximum preventive protection against #NTDs. #WFAAW25 #Prevention #WHA76.19

More key messages

Consuming a well-balanced diet rich in natural folates, eating fortified breads and cereals in addition to #FolicAcid supplementation will help to reduce the risk of #NTDs. #WFAAW25 #Prevention #WHA76.19

Folic Acid supplementation, large-scale #fortification and #education are all key to maximising #FolicAcid preventable #NTDs. #WFAAW25 #Prevention #WHA76.19

Up to 90% of babies affected by Spina Bifida are also affected by Hydrocephalus. By reducing the risk of #NTDs we can also reduce the risk of associated Hydrocephalus. #WFAAW25 #FolicAcid #Prevention #WHA76.19

More key messages

People with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus and their families, together with healthcare providers and millers are the best advocates to raise awareness about the importance of supplementation and to make #fortification a reality. #WFAAW25 #FolicAcid #Prevention #WHA76.19

#Fortification of staple foods with #FolicAcid is vital to support the reproductive health of women globally #WFAAW #IFGPI. We can all make a difference towards reducing the risk of #NTDs by raising vital awareness about the importance of #FolicAcid #WFAAW25 #WHA76.19

Economic and humanitarian crises, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, exacerbate existing health inequalities and increase the number of those suffering from malnutrition. As the most effective means of combating large scale micronutrient deficiencies, food fortification has become even more important than ever #WFAAW25 #FolicAcid #Prevention #WHA76.19

Resources

- IFGPI Folic Acid Leaflet in EN, FR, NL, ES, IT, TR
- Smarter Futures' Fortification Work
- More about IF work on Prevention
- Advocacy Tool to Promote the Implementation of Folic Acid Intervention
- WHO Guidelines on Food Fortification and Micronutrients
- WHO Recommendations on Maternal Health
- More information about Folic Acid by the WHO
- Prevention of neural tube defects in Europe: a public health failure (EU)

Resources

- IF Information Package on Prevention through Food Fortification
- IF Toolkit Steps for an Advocacy Campaign
- Lancet Publication: Preventing birth defects, saving lives, and promoting health equity
- Smarter Futures 15 Years of Impact
- IF Statement: A Call for a Global Action to Reduce the Prevalence of Neural Tube Defects Worldwide
- WHA67.19 Resolution: Accelerating efforts for preventing micronutrient deficiencies and their consequences, including spina bifida and other neural tube defects, through safe and effective food fortification
- Global SBH Community Committed to Support Who Member States in The Implementation of Safe and Effective Food Fortification (Press release)

Materials to download and share

- WFAAW25 Poster

- WFAAW25 Save the date banner

- WFAAW25 Social media visual 1
- WFAAW25 Social media visual 2
- WFAAW25 Social media visual 3
- WFAAW25 Social media visual 4
- WFAAW25 Social media visual 5
- WFAAW25 Social media visual 6
- WFAAW25 Social media visual 7
- WFAAW25 Social media visual 8

THANK YOU ALL FOR SUPPORTING WORLD FOLIC ACID AWARENESS WEEK, AND FOR CONTINUING TO SHARE IMPORTANT MESSAGES ABOUT SPINA BIFIDA AND HYDROCEPHALUS PREVENTION.

Your participation is key to support IF in raising awareness.

JOIN US AGAIN IN 2026!

For further information please contact IF at:
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+32 (0) 471 84 41 54

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR SPINA BIFIDA AND HYDROCEPHALUS