

## Folic Acid Cheap Insurance

Having had the experience of having a puppy born with spina bifida, I have decided to supplement my bitches at least two months prior to breeding with Folic Acid, a B vitamin that helps the body make new healthy cells.

Human physicians have recommended folic acid supplementation prior to conception for years. The reason is that Folic Acid reduces the chance of birth defects such as congenital heart disease, urinary tract anomalies, cleft palates, limb defects, pyloric stenosis, (a narrowing of part of the stomach) and neural tube defects (NTDs).

According to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NTDs are birth defects of the brain and spinal cord. The two most common neural tube defects are spina bifida and anencephaly. In spina bifida, the fetal spinal column doesn't close completely during the first month of pregnancy. There is usually nerve damage that causes at least some paralysis of the legs. In anencephaly, much of the brain does not develop. Babies with anencephaly are either stillborn or die shortly after birth.

The March of Dimes Website states that getting enough folic acid before and during pregnancy prevents most neural tube defects. If you want to go the natural route foods that are rich in folate include folic acid enriched foods such as cereals and grains, deep green leafy vegetables, carrots, liver, egg yolk, cantaloupe, apricots, pumpkin, avocados, beans, and whole and dark rye flour.

Since Folic Acid helps the body make healthy new cells, I may just give it to all my dogs. At a minimum I am going to feed kibble that has folic acid listed as an ingredient. I figure it is cheap insurance.