



Title	Benefits and Risks of Fortifying Flour with Folic Acid to Reduce Risk of Neural Tube Defects
Agency	SBU, The Swedish Council on Technology Assessment in Health Care PO Box 5650, SE-114 86 Stockholm, Sweden; Tel: +46 8 412 32 00, Fax: +46 8 411 32 60; info@sbu.se, www.sbu.se
Reference	SBU Report 183, 2007. ISBN 978-91-85413-15-7. Full text report in Swedish and summary and conclusions in English are available at www.sbu.se/published

Aim

To systematically review the literature on the effects and risks of fortifying flour with folic acid to prevent neural defects (NTD) in the newborn.

Conclusions and results

The results are divergent concerning the risks for twin pregnancies. The study discusses the risks of cancer development, especially in the colon, but does not include a systematic review.

Fortifying flour reduces the risk of neural defects. The extent of the reduction is uncertain. An estimated reduction of 25% would lead to a reduction in the number of pregnancies with NTD from 100 to 75 per year in Sweden. A consequence would be a reduction in induced late abortions from 80 to 56 and a reduction in babies born with NTD from 20-25 to 15-20.

Recommendations

None.

Methods

Systematic review.

Further research/reviews required

Representative studies on folic acid intake and levels in plasma in fertile women.

Studies on the level of knowledge concerning folic acid supplementation in fertile women.

Study of the risks for high intake of folic acid.