

## An informative read

Re: *Canadian Health*, July/August 2008. I was in a doctor's office awhile ago and had lots of time to look at all the magazines. I wanted to let you know that when I came across *Canadian Health*, I read the whole issue during my wait. Your magazine is absolutely great! I couldn't put it down. I wanted to purchase one as soon as I got out of the doctor's office but was disappointed when I couldn't find it in any store. But I was pleasantly surprised to find all the articles posted on your website [www.canadian-health.ca]. I wanted to thank you very much for two articles in particular: "Keep Tabs on Your Blood Pressure" and "The Joyful Sleeper." Both very informative. Keep up the good work.

Wendy Manz  
Winnipeg

## Folic acid revisited

Re: "The Facts on Folate" (July/August 2008). This article came at the perfect time for me. I was just over four months pregnant, and well aware of the importance of taking folic acid before, during and after pregnancy. My question, however, is how much is too much? After reading your article, I decided to check the dosages I'd been consuming for the previous six months. To my amazement, I had been taking 2,100 micrograms [mcg] of folic acid in supplements. And since your article indicated that the current upper tolerable intake limit for folic acid is 1,000 mcg per day, I went into panic mode. What would happen to my baby? Would I get colon/breast cancer? What other effects would overdosing have?

About a year ago, I mentioned to my naturopath that I was planning to have a child. In preparing me for a healthy pregnancy, she got me taking a vitamin B complex (1,000 mcg of folic acid) and a folic acid/DHA supplement (600 mcg of folic acid). Now I am taking a prenatal multivitamin (500 mcg). If I've done my calculations correctly, I've been downing 2,100 mcg of supplemental folic acid a day. Quite a shock, needless to say. And since I'm a fan of vegetables and legumes, I'm consuming plenty of natural folate.

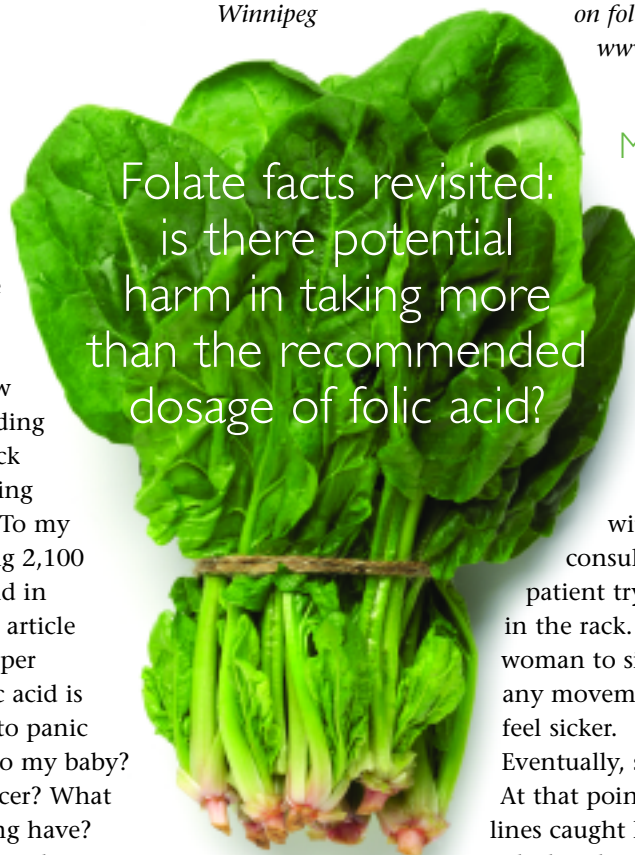
I've now cut out all my supplements except the prenatal multivitamin since I don't want to run the risk

of harming my baby or myself. So, my questions are: how much potential damage is there in taking more than twice the upper limit of folic acid, and will 500 mcg be enough for me and my baby?

Carolyn Poon  
Vancouver

*It is unlikely that your short-term use of high-dose supplements of folic acid will harm you or your baby. This B vitamin is water-soluble, and excess amounts of it are readily excreted in urine. You are, however, prudent to cut back your supplemental folic acid to the amount in your prenatal multivitamin. That, combined with the folate and folic acid you consume daily in food, should be more than adequate to prevent birth defects. For more information on folic acid in pregnancy, go to [www.motherisk.org](http://www.motherisk.org).*

— The editors



Folate facts revisited:  
is there potential  
harm in taking more  
than the recommended  
dosage of folic acid?

## Migraine made simple

Re: "Migraine: The Headache That's Not a Headache" (January/February 2008).

I was on a business trip to Calgary and was listening to my car radio when I heard a local radio personality talking about going to see her doctor. She was very sick but didn't know what was wrong with her. While waiting for her consultation, she saw an elderly patient trying to put a magazine back in the rack. She desperately wanted this woman to sit down and be still, because any movement around her made her feel sicker.

Eventually, she got up to help the woman. At that point, one of the magazine's cover lines caught her attention: "Migraine: The Headache That's Not a Headache." That sounded exactly like what she had. She read the article before her consultation with the doctor and was able to diagnose herself in advance. She had a migraine! The radio personality then said, "Thank you, *Canadian Health* magazine!" I was very impressed.

James Wilson  
Ottawa

To comment on articles, send your letters by email to [editor@canadian-health.ca](mailto:editor@canadian-health.ca) or by post to Editor, Canadian Health, 6 Withrow Avenue, Toronto, ON M4K 1C9.