

# Britain to add folate to bread

May 18 2007

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British food regulators say folic acid should be added to all packaged white bread.

The Food Standards Agency's action marks the first compulsory fortification of food since WWII, when the addition of calcium, iron, vitamin B1 and B3 to flour was mandatory, The Telegraph said Thursday.

Doctors say the fortified bread could prevent up to 166 babies from developing birth defects such as spinal bifid or encephaly each year, the British newspaper said.

Folic acid is a source of folate, a B-vitamin needed for the rapid cell division and growth that takes place during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, when women are advised to take a supplement of 400 micrograms a day.

While the United States, Canada and Chile have already introduced mandatory fortification of some foods, Britain is the first in Europe to introduce compulsory fortification, the newspaper said.

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Citation: Britain to add folate to bread (2007, May 18) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2007-05-britain-folate-bread.html>

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