

[IMAGE]

## **Expectant Moms: Another Reason to Take Folic Acid**

By Editorial Staff

For years, folic acid (vitamin B9) has been touted as a crucial vitamin to take before and during pregnancy, and for good reason: It dramatically reduces the risk your baby will suffer birth defects of the brain and spinal cord, which generally occur within the first 3-4 weeks of conception. But that's not all folic acid can do for your baby. Evidence suggests it also can reduce the risk of autism – even if the mothers are exposed to pesticides before or during pregnancy, which have been linked to an increased risk of autism.

The new study published in *Environmental Health Perspectives* found that taking folic acid (at least 800 mcg per day) in the first three months prior to or following conception significantly reduced autism risk in expectant mothers exposed to flea or tick soaps or shampoos on pets; sprays, dusts, powders, or skin applications for fleas or ticks on pets; professional pest control or extermination; ant-, fly-, or cockroach-control products; and indoor foggers.

So, two morals to this story: First, folic acid is essential before and during pregnancy. Second, exposure to pesticides is never good, but before and during pregnancy, it's a big no-no. Talk to your doctor for more information and read [Dr. Claudia Anrig's article](#), "Pregnancy Do's and Dont's" for tips to help ensure a healthy pregnancy for you and your baby.

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