Folic Acid Campaign Workgroup

**Major Topics**

* **I ONLY TWO Choices** are availableto prevent NTD
  + Convince FDA to increase fortification to adequate levels
    - “Easy” Button
    - Fortification saves US taxpayers over $100 for every $1 spent on fortification
    - B-9 fortification (at any level) has never been shown to have adverse effects
  + Convince **ALL** reproductive age women to take daily B-9 (Folic Acid)
    - 50% of US pregnancies are OOPS!!
    - Self reported levels of preconception B-9 have remained < 30 % after many years and many campaigns
* **II** **At least an additional 2000 NTD can be prevented** in the US every year
  + Current FDA fortification levels are only preventing 1,000 of the usual 4,000 US cases (25% reduction) of NTD each year
  + Chile , using almost twice the US fortification levels, is preventing 50% of their cases
  + EBM studies have shown 70-100 % reductions using higher preconceptional doses
* **III** **Consumer education** (health literacy) is critical
  + Only preconception B-9 (fortification or supplementation) will prevent NTD
    - Eating the “healthiest” diet will decrease but not prevent most NTD
    - “Multivitamins” without B-9 have no benefit to mom or baby even if taken before getting pregnant and can cause problems if too many are taken during pregnancy (excess A & D)
      * Only adequate levels of **B-9 before you get pregnant** will prevent NTD
    - Starting B-9 at your 1st new OB visit is **too late**
    - Hispanics have the highest risk and require higher preconception intake

**HOT POINTS**

* **Of all the vitamins in “pregnancy (prenatal) vitamins” only adequate Vitamin B-9 levels can’t be obtained from a healthy diet and therefore require fortification (added to our food supply in small amounts like Vitamin D in milk) or supplementation (taking a B-9 every day)**
* **Babies spines fail to close (NTD) before women know they are pregnant so waiting to start B-9 after a positive pregnancy is too late to prevent these birth defects**
* **Most babies with NTD will either die or be paralyzed for life**
* **Increasing fortification levels of B-9 can prevent at least an additional 2000 NTD cases each year in the US**
* **Each dollar spent on B-9 fortification saves the US taxpayer $100 every year**
* **The only way to prevent NTD is to take extra B-9 before you get pregnant**
* **Fortified foods have about 100 micrograms (mcg) per day; at least 400 mcg is needed**

**Catch Phrase**

* **The FDA can prevent an additional 2000 NTD each year by quadrupling B-9 fortification levels**