

THE GOAL

## Sink a Cold

THE NUTRIENT SOLUTION

## Zinc

When everyone around you is sick, how can you avoid catching the virus du jour? A daily dose of 12 mg of zinc helps keep colds at bay. In fact, “even a mild zinc deficiency can make you more susceptible to colds because it impairs the ability of your T-cells to fight infection,” says Simin Nikbin Meydani, Ph.D., a professor of nutrition and immunology at Tufts University in Boston. But you can get too much of a good thing, she warns: Taking more than 100 mg per day leads to zinc toxicity (causing stomach cramps, vomiting, and diarrhea), so beware of popping zinc lozenges like candy.

Daily Need: 12 mg

Sniffle Fighters: 3 oz. steak (5.6 mg), 3 oz. crab (3.6 mg), ¼ cup wheat germ (3.5 mg), 3 oz. cooked dark meat turkey (2.3 mg), 1 cup plain yogurt (2.2 mg), 1 cup cooked soybeans (1.6 mg)

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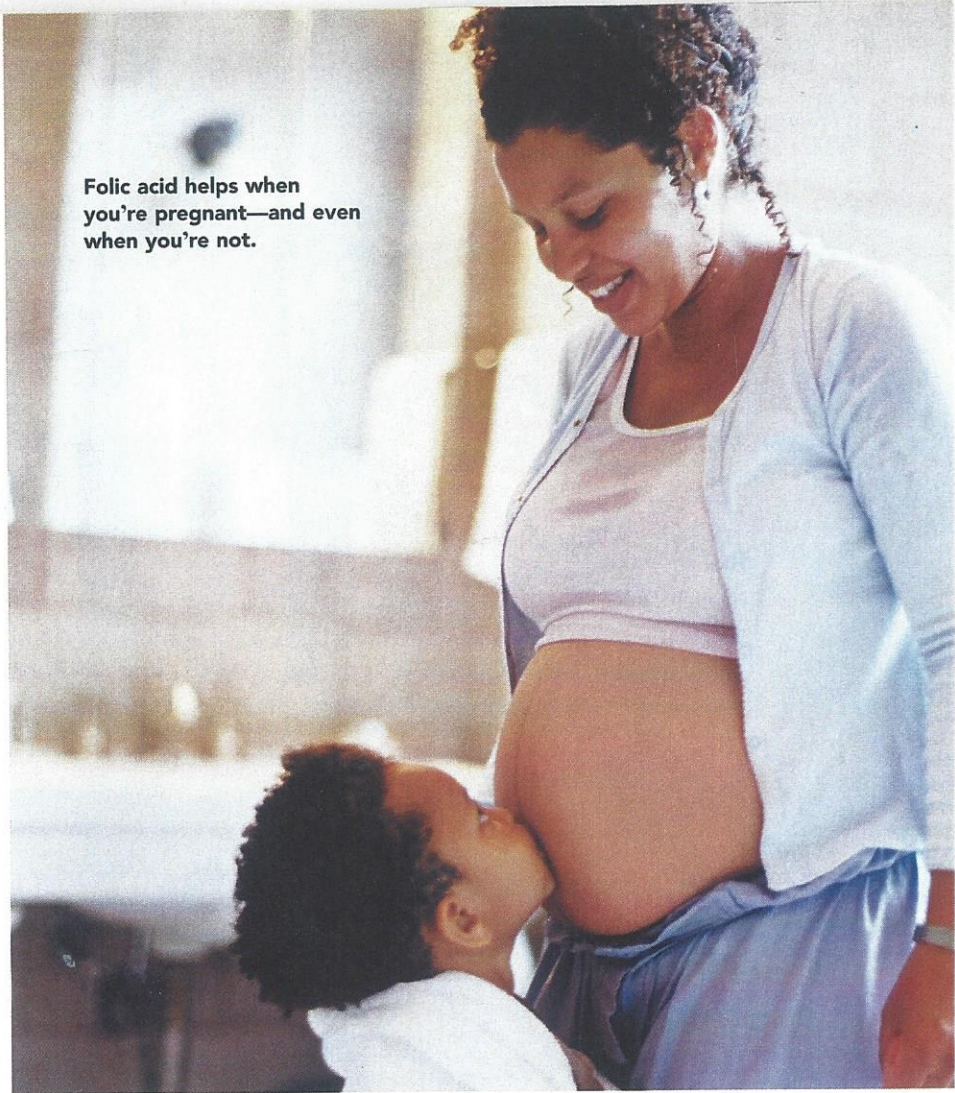
## Plan for Pregnancy

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## Folic Acid

Because the stork doesn't always operate on a schedule—about half of pregnancies are unintended—the March of Dimes recommends that all women of childbearing age take folic acid to prevent birth defects. The B vitamin folic acid is critical in the several weeks before, and the four weeks after conception—before you miss a period and suspect something's up—for the development of a fetus's neural tube, which becomes the spinal cord and brain. In addition, research suggests that folic acid may reduce the risk of early miscarriage, premature delivery, and low birth weight; it may also prevent some childhood cancers. How much do you need? The March of Dimes recommends taking a multivitamin that contains 400 mcg (micrograms), in addition to consuming other foods rich in the nutrient. Even if you don't get pregnant, taking folic acid may not be in vain; studies suggest it may lower your risk of heart disease and some cancers.

Folic acid helps when you're pregnant—and even when you're not.



Daily Need: 400 mcg

Best Baby Food: 1 serving enriched cereal (usually 100 to 400 mcg, depending on the brand), ½ cup cooked lentils (180 mcg), ½ cup cooked pinto beans (146 mcg), ½ cup asparagus (127 mcg), 1 cup cooked spaghetti (99 mcg)

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## Your Long-Range Investments?

**Nutrition is just like banking:** Once you fulfill your immediate needs, focus on planning for your future. The three vitamins and minerals below may help prevent heart disease and cancer. Check the following requirements, as well as delicious foods that will help you meet them.

**Magnesium** Daily need: 400 mg  
Food sources: whole grains, cooked dried beans, spinach

**Potassium** Daily need: 3,500 mg  
Food sources: veggies and fruit

**Vitamin E** Daily need: 15 mg  
Food sources: safflower oil, almonds, peanuts, green leafy vegetables, mango