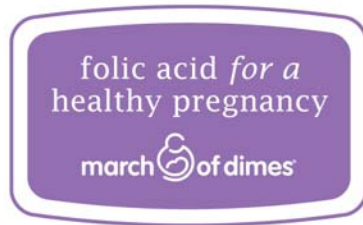


## Standing Proud – The Grains Industry Celebrates Ten Years of Saving Babies

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January 2008 marks the 10 year anniversary of the Food and Drug Administration's mandate to fortify the U.S. flour supply with folic acid, a B vitamin which may help prevent certain birth defects. Since the FDA issued the mandate, neural tube defects in the US have declined by more than one-third, sparing some one thousand babies each year.



In celebration of the 10 year anniversary and in an effort to promote increased consumption of folic acid among women of childbearing age, the March of Dimes and the Grain Foods Foundation have created a new *Folic Acid for a Healthy Pregnancy* seal.

The seal is designed to help women quickly and easily identify foods rich in folic acid at retail. Daily consumption of folic acid beginning before pregnancy is crucial because birth defects of the brain and spine known as neural tube defects (NTDs), such as spina bifida, can occur in the early weeks following conception, often before a woman knows she is pregnant.

But not enough American women understand that consuming the B vitamin folic acid every day can help prevent serious birth defects, and only 40 percent are taking daily multivitamin supplements containing this essential nutrient beginning before pregnancy, two recent surveys show. According to CDC, approximately 50 percent of pregnancies in the U.S. are unplanned, so it is important women of child-bearing age have sufficient levels of folic acid in their bodies.

In fact, according to a survey conducted by SRBI and commissioned by the Grain Foods Foundation, two-thirds of women believe that whole wheat and multi-grain breads contain the most folic acid. Only 12 percent of women perceive enriched white bread as having high levels of folic acid, despite the fact that it actually has twice as much folic acid as whole grain or whole wheat bread.