

Would you like to help us prevent spina bifida in Norway?

October 25 is the International day for spina bifida and hydrocephalus. Many cases of spina bifida can be avoided by women eating enough folate before pregnancy began. It is still important to spread knowledge about folic acid to young women, and as school nurse you are in a key role.

To you as the school nurse and working with youth

TRS Resource Centre for Rare Disorders and the Norwegian association for Spina Bifida, want to contribute to reducing the incidence of spina bifida and other damage in the brain and spinal cord (neural tube defects). They occur early in fetal life, and due to a combination of hereditary and environmental-related factors. Spina bifida causes the spinal cord and membranes bulging through an opening in the vertebrae. Consequences are paralysis and sensory loss below the level of the hernia back. Urination and bowel are also affected. Many also have changes in the brain and difficulties with taking in, processing and use information (cognition). Symptoms and signs shows great variation.

Women's daily intake of the B vitamin folic acid before and during early pregnancy reduces the risk. Our experience is that many young women do not know this. According to Institute of Public Health takes only one out of four folate early enough. We therefore urge you to continue to talk about folate in your work with women of childbearing age.

Why prevent spina bifida?

The condition is permanent and requires lifelong treatment and follow-up. It is common to have complications from various organ systems. Although many live well with spina bifida are also demanding everyday. Practical addition, tasks, and contacts with health care takes time and effort. Children and teenagers usually need special educational interventions and assistance to develop their potential. Adults over 40 years participate little in the mainstream labor market.

Attached is the updated fact sheet from the National Institute of Public Health, Folate - Folate supplementation and pregnancy (Web 2013) and brochure Sexuality and spina bifida (TRS 2008), written jointly by HABU at Østfold Hospital, Spina Bifida and hydrocephalusforeningen and TRS Resource Centre.

Yours sincerely

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