

As A Source Of Vital Folic Acid, Rice Is Nice

(NAPSA)—According to a report published in the American Journal of Public Health, Americans should consume more of the B vitamin folic acid for better health. Yet less than half of women of childbearing age and under 5 percent of those 65 and older consume the FDA-recommended 400 micrograms daily.

Fortunately, the Food and Drug Administration mandates folic acid fortification of U.S. grain products such as enriched white rice to improve health and help prevent birth defects. Enriched white rice is also low in calories, fat free and a good source of iron. It is gluten free and nonallergenic, low cost and easy to prepare.

Recent research points to many health benefits from folic acid:

- According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the incidence of neural tube birth defects has decreased by 26 percent since fortification began.

- High dietary folic acid intake may be associated with a reduced risk of pancreatic cancer.

- Diets high in folic acid may reduce the risk of Alzheimer's.

- Dietary folic acid intake may be associated with reduced risk of ovarian cancer, especially among women who consume alcohol.

- Adolescents can lower levels of a marker for cardiovascular disease by boosting their intake of folic acid from enriched grains.

A half-cup serving of cooked rice contains approximately 46 mcg, or 11.5 percent of the recommended daily allowance, and partners well with such other folic acid-rich foods as spinach, asparagus and beans, as in this recipe from the USA Rice Federation.

TUSCAN WHITE BEANS, CHICKEN AND RICE

Makes 6 servings

1 tablespoon olive oil
 $\frac{3}{4}$ pound boneless, skinless



Boost the folic acid in your diet with a delicious dish of chicken, rice and beans.

chicken breasts, cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick strips
1 medium onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pound fresh spinach leaves, washed, stems removed, torn
1 $1\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce can diced tomatoes, drained
6 cups cooked rice
2 15-ounce cans navy beans or Great Northern beans, drained and rinsed
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons dry sherry
2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground black pepper
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Heat oil in large skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add chicken, onion and garlic; cook and stir 7 to 10 minutes or until chicken is slightly brown and onion is tender. Add spinach and tomatoes. Cook 3 to 4 minutes or until spinach is wilted and tomatoes are simmering. Add rice, beans, vinegar, sherry, Italian seasoning and pepper. Cook and stir 3 to 4 minutes more until thoroughly heated. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

For more recipes and facts on rice, visit www.usarice.com.