

HEALTH ALERT!

Spina Bifida Awareness

(NAPSA)—You can help reduce the risk of spina bifida. More than 250,000 Americans have been touched by this birth defect in which the spine doesn't close properly. It is the most common permanently disabling birth defect in the U.S. Every day, an average of eight babies are affected by spina bifida or a similar birth defect of the brain and spine.



Up to 90 percent of children with the worst form of spina bifida have fluid on their brains and must have surgery to insert a “shunt” that helps drain the fluid. The effects last a lifetime. It can cause paralysis, bladder and bowel control problems, learning disabilities and depression.

Over 60 million women of childbearing age are now at risk for having a pregnancy affected by spina bifida. To reduce their risk, women can take a vitamin with folic acid every day, even when not planning a pregnancy. Taking folic acid at the same time you do another every day activity—such as reading the newspaper—can help you remember.

To learn more, call the Spina Bifida Association at 1-800-621-3141 or visit www.sbaa.org.