



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Region IV Public Health
Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum counties
and Cowlitz Tribe

Health Update

Please deliver a copy of the accompanying update to each provider in your organization. Questions regarding this update may be directed to the following Region IV health officers:

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH
Clark County Public Health, (360) 397-8412

Sarah D. Present MD, MPH
Skamania County Community Health, (509) 427-3850
Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services, (360) 795-8630

Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH
Cowlitz County Health & Human Services, (360) 414-5599

Please distribute

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for specific incident for situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.



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HEALTH UPDATE

September 5, 2014

TO: Physicians and other Health Care Providers

FROM: Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH, Health Officer
Sarah Present, MD, MPH, Health Officer
Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH, Health Officer

RE: Recommendation that all women of childbearing age consume 0.4 mg (400 micrograms) of folic acid daily

Due to an unusually high incidence of anencephaly in south central Washington, state health officials are asking providers in all areas of the state to routinely recommend the following to all women of childbearing age:

- Take recommended amounts of folic acid (400 micrograms) daily (www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/folicacid/recommendations.html)
- Seek early prenatal care
- Test water from private wells annually for nitrates and bacteria

Women who have already had a pregnancy affected with any neural tube defect should increase the daily dose of folic acid to 4000 micrograms starting one month before attempting to conceive.

In addition to meeting the routine reporting requirements for birth defects, providers are asked to report any pregnancies affected by any neural tube defect among women residing in Benton, Franklin or Yakima counties to the Washington State Department of Health by calling Lillian Bensley at (360) 236-4248.

The incidence of anencephaly in the south central Washington region is about four times higher than the national average. Among more than 33,000 births in Yakima, Benton, and Franklin counties between January 2010 to December 2013, there were 27 cases of anencephaly—a rate of 8.1 cases per 10,000 live births. The national average is 2.1 cases per 10,000 live births.

To report notifiable conditions or if you have questions, please call:

- Clark County Public Health: (360) 397-8182.
- Cowlitz County Health Department: (360) 414-5599
- Skamania County Community Health: (509) 427-3850
- Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services (360) 795-6207