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## Lost chances to save baby

FOUR out of 10 pregnant women in Britain take folic acid too late to protect their unborn children against neural tube defects such as spina bifida, it was claimed yesterday.

An expert group is urging all ovulating and sexually active women to take folic acid whether or not they are planning to conceive. Folic Acid Action recommends a daily supplement of 400 micrograms of the nutrient.

Rosemary Batchelor, of the Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, said: "Women and even health professionals are often not aware of the critical window for supplementation – one month pre-conception and up to 12 weeks into pregnancy."