



21 September 2009

Media release

Folate now added to bread, but naturally there in bananas

- **Compulsory now for bread-making flour to contain folic acid**
- **Bananas are a valuable source of folate**
- **Folate ideal for young women and reduces the risk of abnormalities in births**

Folic acid which is a form of the B vitamin folate has just been mandated as an additive to bread-flour in a quest to reduce the number of neural tube defects in babies such as spina bifida.

Accredited Nutritionist, Glenn Cardwell says, "While this move will help to bring folate intake among women up to the recommended level of 400 micrograms (mcg) a day, everyone should remember that one of the most natural and simplest ways to increase folate intake is to eat a banana.

Bananas are a great source of folate providing up to 10 percent of the recommended daily intake making them ideal for young women and also as an adjunct to avoiding heart disease and dementia.

According to Food Standards Australia and New Zealand, "Neural tube defects are the most serious birth defects. With spina bifida, the spinal column does not close properly and the baby is born with exposed nerves and damages vertebrae. Children with spina bifida can face paralysis, problems with mobility, muscle control, coordination and learning."

Cardwell says, "The National Health and Medical Research Council recommends that pregnant women take a folic acid supplement at least a month before falling pregnant and for three months after conception, and because almost 50% of pregnancies are unplanned in Australia, snacking on a banana every day is a great start to boosting that folate intake just in case.

"A medium banana provides about 20 mcg of folate. In comparison, bread will now have about 50 mcg/slice. Put another way, a banana sandwich could provide 120mcg folate, about 30% of daily folate needs.

"Of course, if you don't eat a lot of bread or want to limit your bread intake, then grab a banana.

"Bananas are also an ideal food to control over-eating because bananas quickly fill your appetite needs," Cardwell says.

Media enquiries

Glenn Cardwell
Nutrition Impact Pty Ltd
Tel: (08) 9367 3556
Mobile: 0413 806 406
Email: glenn@glenncardwell.com