

# Mandatory Fortification

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has developed two new mandatory fortification Standards for the addition of folic acid and iodine to bread.

Folic acid is being added to bread-making flour to further reduce the incidence of neural tube defects (NTDs). In Australia, approximately 300-350 pregnancies are affected by a NTD each year.

Iodine is being added to bread (via iodised salt) to address the re-emergence of iodine deficiency in the population.

Mandatory fortification will assist in shifting the population intake of these two nutrients toward the recommended level of intake.

However, mandatory fortification cannot deliver sufficient amounts of folic acid and iodine to all pregnant and breastfeeding women without causing large numbers of young children to exceed the Upper Level of intake (UL). Therefore supplements will be required for some population groups.

*Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or considering becoming pregnant will still require folic acid and iodine supplements.*

## Target groups



Mandatory folic acid fortification is targeted at women of childbearing age.

The general population; especially infants, young children, pregnant and breast-feeding women will benefit from mandatory iodine fortification.



## Level of fortification

From September 2009 wheat flour and salt used in bread products (except organic) will be fortified at a level of:

- 2-3 mg of folic acid per kg of wheat flour; and
- 25-65 mg of iodine per kg of salt.

This means that 100 g of bread (roughly 3 slices) will contain about:

- 120 micrograms of folic acid; and
- 46 micrograms of iodine.

## Results

Mandatory folic acid fortification is expected to reduce the number of NTD affected pregnancies by up to 14% in Australia (14-49 pregnancies).

Mandatory iodine fortification is expected to reduce inadequate iodine intakes from 43% to less than 5% in the Australian population.

*Dietary advice provided by health professionals may need to change as a result of these new fortification Standards.*

## Key messages for health professionals

- The level of fortification is considered safe and will deliver additional folic acid and iodine to the population.
- Individuals with pre-existing thyroid disease may be more sensitive to increases in iodine intake. If individuals are concerned they should check with their doctor.
- Folic acid and iodine (as iodised salt) will be required to be identified in the ingredients list of packaged bread products.
- Organic flour/bread is not required to be fortified.
- Messages may need to be tailored for specific subgroups based on known nutritional status, socio-economic status and cultural and/or linguistic diversity.
- Mandatory fortification is not sufficient enough to meet the increased folic acid and iodine needs of pregnant and breastfeeding women. Therefore supplements will still be required.



- Special pregnancy supplements are recommended in preference to general-purpose multi-vitamins.
- Women who eat little or no bread should be particularly vigilant about taking supplements.

Women	Folic Acid (≥400 µg/day)	Iodine (150 – 250 µg/day)
Planning Pregnancy	✓	*
Pregnant	✓	✓
Breastfeed- ing	-	✓

\*Discuss with your medical practitioner or health professional

FSANZ is collaborating with government and non-government organisations to raise awareness of these two new public health initiatives and to help disseminate consistent messages.

For further information relating to mandatory folic acid and iodine fortification visit the FSANZ website at [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au).



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**Mandatory Fortification of Bread with Folic Acid and Iodine**



**Mandatory Fortification of Bread with Folic Acid and Iodine**

**New Territory for Bread**



Food Standards Australia New Zealand