**6 Signs That You’re Running Low On Folic Acid**

The U.S. Institute of Medicine recommends all adults to maintain consumption of folic acid at 400 micrograms per day. But a lot of you have never even bothered tracking your daily folic acid intake. After all, how bad could it get if your diet was low on this one tiny ingredient, right?

Turns out, very!

I know what you’re thinking. The name rings a bell. But you’re having a hard time putting your finger on what exactly is folic acid? It’s because you probably know it by the name of vitamin B9.

Also known as folate, this vitamin is a non-negotiable if you’re expecting a child. But it’s not like it doesn’t concern you in any way if you’re not. What if I told you that a deficiency of vitamin B9 hinders the supply of oxygen to your internal organs that can result in malfunctioning? Is that serious enough for you?

Vitamin B9 plays a crucial role in the production of red blood cells (RBC) in your body. Naturally, its deficiency can lead to anaemia and consequently, inadequate supply of oxygen to several of your body parts.

And that’s just tip of the iceberg. Folate also contributes to other pivotal processes like DNA repair. According to a New York-based dietician, Dara Godfrey:

*“If we don’t get in enough folate, our cells cannot function normally, and the cell growth may be hampered.”*

But you don’t necessarily have to rush to the hospital to get your vitamin B9 levels checked. The good news is that the human body is designed with an in-built notification panel that pops up every time there is something wrong with it. You just have to be on the lookout.

So, if your body is presenting the following symptoms, chances are that your folic acid intake is not sufficient.

1. **Recurring Body Pains**

Remember yesterday when you had this headache that weighed on your overall productivity at work? And you had one last week as well, right?

Unfortunately, you’re so consumed by your personal and professional life that you keep ignoring the red flags that your body is waving right in your face. You never stop and look into the principal cause behind the recurring episodes of body pains.

Here you are in your prime youth with a back pain that comes knocking on your door every couple of days. And there’s no one to question, why?

I don’t want to bore you with technicalities of human anatomy. But understanding the fundamentals will help you develop a link between the deficiency of vitamin B9 and recurring body pains.

If a part of your body is not receiving sufficient supply of oxygen, its innate response to the deficiency is to swell the arteries providing blood to the organ. While that might help with improving the supply of oxygen, the swollen arteries are the reason it aches.

In case of a headache, it’s the arteries supplying blood to your brain that are swollen. In other words, your brain, the central processing unit of your body is not receiving as much oxygen as it requires. Do we really need to elaborate on the repercussions here?

So, if body pains are slowly becoming a part of your life, it might be time you had your folic acid levels tested. Because a deficiency of folate might just be the culprit of your anaemia.

1. **Something More Than A Headache**

I guess we’re going to talk a little bit about the repercussions of insufficient oxygen supply to your brain after all.

The bad news is that insufficient oxygen supply to your brain does not ONLY cause swollen arteries and headaches. Being the central processing unit, a human brain is in charge of serving countless functions for your body. And cognition tops them all.

If your diet is low on folic acid, your brain gets a signal that you don’t care about it enough to ensure a sufficient supply of oxygen to it. Naturally, it's going to want to seek revenge – that will come in the form of fading cognitive abilities.

Forgot your wife’s birthday and your anniversary this year? Maybe it’s not because you’re a lousy husband. It’s just that a deficiency of folic acid is presenting itself in you in the form of forgetfulness.

The impact of vitamin B9 deficiency on cognition may also manifest in the form of mood swings, lack of concentration, and depression. Dr Maria Corrada (Department of Neurology, University of California) established in her study that sufficient consumption of folate helps minimise the risk of developing more serious disorders as well, like Alzheimer’s disease and dementia.

1. **Gasping For Air**

I can bet that you’ll never forget the days of glory when you could run a few miles without running out of breath. But lately, you find yourself out of it on climbing a few stairs at home.

I know you love to tell yourself that you’re just short of stamina since you are no longer in your twenties. But deep down, even you know that you’re not supposed to feel that way in your thirties, or even forties for that matter.

The reason you’re gasping for air after activities that aren’t even exhausting by a long stretch, may also be ascribed to the vitamin B9 deficiency driven anaemia. Simply put, it might just be the low RBC count that is failing to provide oxygen to parts of your body.

As a response, your body decides to make a few adjustments to increase the supply of oxygen. For instance, you may experience an increase in the pulse rate. Why? Because then your heart will pump blood to the rest of the body at a faster pace than usual. The faster it sends blood to the organs, the more efficient is the supply of oxygen.

In extreme cases, or intense physical activity that sharply depletes the oxygen supply to your brain, you can also expect to feel dizzy – and should have your folate levels tested if you’re not crazy about the idea of fainting the next time.

1. **Pale Skin**

So, your body has been signalling low levels of folic acid via frequently recurring headaches. But you attributed it to stress. Perhaps things are hard at work these days. It makes sense.

You’ve been running out of breath on minimal physical exertion, but you told yourself that you’re not in your prime youth anymore. Alright, I’ll give you that one as well.

But how do you ignore a sign as visible as your pale skin? Are you really so naïve to think that you are naturally pale in color? Your skin went through all the trouble of changing its color just so you would listen.

It’s your skin’s way of telling you that it’s not receiving as much oxygen as it needs. And as we have already established, it’s probably because your diet is not providing the required amount of folic acid to your body.

Simply put, you’re low on a crucial ingredient that streamlines the production of RBCs in your body. If your RBC count is low, who’s going to ensure sufficient supply of oxygen to your skin?

Listen, you can spend a ton of money on cosmetic products, but it still won’t matter if your skin looks like someone who’s developing jaundice. If you value younger and healthier-looking skin with a natural glow, restoring sufficient supply of vitamin B9 should be job one.

**Top Dietary Sources Of Folic Acid**

If you are someone like me, the thought of popping pills to combat deficiencies would probably make you uncomfortable. The good news is that folate deficiency can be conveniently fixed with minor adjustments to your diet.

If you have identified vitamin B9 deficiency, starting from now, I want you to make dark green vegetables a part of your regular diet. Broccoli, asparagus, spinach, Brussels sprouts, whatever works for you.

Even if none of it works for you, go ahead and take it in lunch. Remember, all good things come at a price. And there isn’t a price that justifies not taking care of your health.

Alright, since that cringy look on your face isn’t going away, I’ll give you more options.

What about citrus? Mushrooms, beans, whole grains? Does any of that work for you? Apart from the dark green vegetables, these are a few of the other top sources of folic acid that you can consider incorporating in your diet.

A word of caution, though. What I’ve mentioned above are signs that hint at insufficient folic acid intake. But don’t make the mistake of reading it as a professional diagnosis. If your symptoms are more severe, act responsibly and consult your doctor.