Folate is really important for women who are planning pregnancy. If women take folate before and during the early stages of pregnancy they are less likely to have a baby with neural tube defects such as spina bifida.

To be healthy and to have healthy children, eat food with folate in it or take Folic Acid tablets. Talk to your Doctor or Aboriginal Healthworker about this.

In 2009 Aboriginal people in Broome, Perth and Kalgoorlie, and non-Aboriginal people in Perth helped us to find out how much folate they had in their red blood cells. We found that some Aboriginal women and men had low folate levels. However, they all had normal levels of vitamin B12. We also found out that a small number of Aboriginal women and men took vitamin supplements, but most ate bread brought from the shop every day.

Folate has now been put in flour and bread. We think that this will reduce the number of Aboriginal babies born with neural tube defects. In the future we need to find out if this has helped Aboriginal people increase their folate levels. To read more about this study, please ask at reception.

Folate is an important vitamin for a healthy body that naturally occurs in some foods such as lettuce, nuts and oranges.