Folic acid in pregnancy

We offer pre-conceptual advice to women about the need to take folic acid to prevent neural tube defects – but many pregnancies are not planned and women don’t seek our advice. Many countries have folic acid fortification of cereals and bread but this is less common in Europe.

Is medical advice in European countries having an impact on the risk of neural tube defects?

In 1991 a UK MRC study conclusively demonstrated that folic acid taken prior to conception could reduce the risk of neural tube defects by up to 72%. Some countries adopted public health measures where food was mandatorily fortified with folic acid, and this resulted in a reduction in neural tube disorders in these countries. However, most of Europe does not have mandatory fortification in place.

A large population based observational study looked at the trends in neural tube defects in Europe over a 20y period between 1991 and 2011 (BMJ 2015;351:h5949). They used registries covering more than 12 million births and identified more than 11 000 cases of neural tube defect.

- The overall incidence of neural tube defect was 9 per 10 000 births (live births and terminations).
- Whilst levels fluctuated from year to year there was no overall downward trend.
- The live birth prevalence of neural tube defects did decrease, suggesting more are being identified as part of anomaly scanning and medical termination is chosen.

The authors conclude that the absence of mandatory folic acid fortification in European countries has prevented the reduction in neural tube defects that could be possible. In addition, peri-conceptual advice is not having sufficient impact. They recommend that mandatory fortification of common foods should be strongly recommended because this has been shown to be effective in other countries.

Yet again an example of where public health measures can succeed where individual efforts have failed.

Folic acid: pre-conceptual recommendations

Here is a quick reminder in case you have forgotten!

All women of child-bearing potential should take 400mcg folic acid daily ideally for 3m before conception and if this is not achieved from as soon as they find out they are pregnant until 12w gestation.

Certain groups should be recommended to take 5mg folic acid (which has to be prescribed):

- Women on anti-epileptics.
- Women with a personal or family history of neural tube defects.
- Women with diabetes.
- Women with sickle cell disease.
- Women with a BMI ≥30.

Folic acid in pregnancy

- Rates of neural tube defect have not reduced over the past 20y.
- Mandatory fortification of food with folic acid would be a more effective strategy.
- Until this happens, grab opportunities to continue to educate women of child-bearing age.

Consider opportunities for promoting folic acid pre-conceptually. Could you add a box to your contraceptive review templates, diabetic and epilepsy reviews, etc.

We make every effort to ensure the information in these pages is accurate and correct at the date of publication, but it is of necessity of a brief and general nature, and this should not replace your own good clinical judgement, or be regarded as a substitute for taking professional advice in appropriate circumstances. In particular check drug doses, side effects and interactions with the British National Formulary. Save insofar as any such liability cannot be excluded at law, we do not accept any liability for loss of any type caused by reliance on the information in these pages.

GP Update Limited
November 2016
OUR UPCOMING COURSES

Our comprehensive one-day update courses for GPs, GP STs, and General Practice Nurses.

We do all the legwork to bring you up to speed on the latest issues and guidance.

All our courses are:

**Relevant**  Developed and presented by practising GPs and immediately relevant to clinical practice.

**Challenging**  Stimulating and thought-provoking.

**Unbiased**  Completely free from any pharmaceutical company sponsorship.

**Fun!**  Humorous and entertaining – without compromising the content!

Are they for me?

Our courses are designed for:

- GPs, trainers and appraisers preparing for appraisal and revalidation or wanting to keep up to date across the whole field of general practice.
- GP ST1, 2 & 3, looking for the perfect launch pad into general practice and help with AKT and CSA revision.
- GPs who want to be brought up to speed following maternity leave or a career break.
- General Practice Nurses, especially those seeing patients with chronic diseases.

What’s included?

- 6 CPD credits in a lecture-based format, with plenty of time for interaction, humour and video clips, to keep you focussed and awake.
- A printed copy of the relevant handbook including the results of the most important research in primary care over the last 5 years and covering the subjects more extensively than possible in the course.
- 12 month’s subscription to [www.gpcpd.com](http://www.gpcpd.com). With three times the content of the handbook, it allows you to capture CPD credits as you read on the site and use it in consultations! It also comes with Focused Learning Activities - online learning activities to provide evidence for your appraisal, and earn hundreds of further hours of CPD credits.
- Buffet lunch and refreshments throughout the day!

Your health is so good, you could even survive a brief stay in hospital

What’s not included?  Our courses contain NO theorists, NO gurus, NO sponsors, NO reps on the day! Just real-life GPs who will be back at the coal face as soon as the course has finished.

www.gp-update.co.uk
The GP Update Course – our flagship course!

With the amount of evidence and literature inundating us, it can be hard to know which bits should change our practice, and how.

The GP Update Course is designed to be very relevant to clinical practice and help you meet the requirements for revalidation.

We collate and synthesise the evidence for you so you don’t have to! Using a lecture based format, with plenty of time for interaction, the GP presenters discuss the results of the most important evidence and guidance, placing them in the context of what is already known about this topic. The presenters also concentrate on what it means to you and your patients in the consulting room tomorrow.

You will also receive access to a wide range of practical step by step guides to prepare for revalidation and prove you are up to date. And you’ll have online access to easily record and track your learning as you go along to avoid those last minute pre-appraisal panics!

2017

**London**
Fri 10 Mar

**London**
Sat 11 Mar

**Oxford**
Thur 16 Mar

**Leeds**
Fri 17 Mar

**Birmingham**
Sat 18 Mar

**Bristol**
Wed 10 May

**Exeter**
Thur 11 May

**London**
Fri 12 May

**London**
Sat 13 May

**Newcastle**
Wed 17 May

**Sheffield**
Thur 18 May

**Manchester**
Fri 19 May

**Birmingham**
Sat 20 May

**Norwich**
Tues 23 May

**Bedford**
Wed 24 May

**London**
Thur 25 May

**Belfast**
Wed 7 June

The Women’s Health Update Course

From the pill to pelvic pain, periods and prolapses, the one day Women’s Health Update course is a comprehensive guide to understanding and managing common gynaecological problems in general practice.

What’s on offer? You will have the pleasure of meeting ‘the Fallopians’, a fictitious family with more gynaecological complaints than you can shake a speculum at. Using a case-based approach will give you the skills to manage your female patients in a real surgery.

We aim to make the day fun, interactive as well as educational. You will leave the course feeling more confident, knowledgeable and with a much stronger pelvic floor!!!

The day is designed for all GPs and GP STs – not just those with a special interest!

2016

**Exeter**
Thur 3 Nov

**London**
Fri 4 Nov

**Leeds**
Thur 10 Nov

**Manchester**
Fri 11 Nov

The Cancer Update Course

Within the next 15 years the need for cancer care will double and you will look after as many cancer survivors as diabetics.

Shared care follow up will become the norm, and secondary care will pass responsibility to us.

A key 2015 Lancet Oncology commission paper warned that: “GPs are inadequately trained and resourced to manage the growing demand for cancer care in high income countries”.

Education for GPs was one of their five key recommendations – we can help!

The Cancer Update Course covers many more topics in much more depth than our GP Update Course. It offers you time to reflect and put your cancer learning into practice.

Cancer care is changing – get ahead with the Red Whale Cancer Update Course.

2016

**Manchester**
Thur 10 Nov

**Birmingham**
Fri 11 Nov

**Cambridge**
Thur 17 Nov

**London**
Fri 18 Nov
Lead. Manage. Thrive! – The NEW management skills course for GPs.

Sometimes it feels like the thriving GP is an endangered species – demands on limited time and resources have never been higher. Our practices run in ever more complex ways and our teams extend beyond the practice walls. Often we get that instinctive feeling that there must be a better way to do things, but creating the space to make it happen can be difficult.

As usual Red Whale has done all the legwork to bring you a concise, practical and actionable one-day course and handbook. Not only have we trawled through lots of relevant management, leadership and development literature, but we have also distilled its content through the lens of real GPs, enabling you to apply it to the reality of your practice.

Who is this course for? GPs at every stage in their career who have that niggling feeling that their practice could be changed for the better, but aren’t quite sure how to make it happen.

We are frequently asked if the course is suitable for other categories of practice staff. While the course has been developed with GPs in mind, it will be highly relevant to anyone who recognises the need to build their personal resilience and leadership skills to meet the demands of modern primary care, for example practice managers, nurses, and administrative and support teams.

2016

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<tr>
<td>Leeds</td>
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Prices

GP Update Course:
GP £195 | GP Registrar £150 | Nurse £150

All other courses:
£225 or £210 for members of [www.gpcpd.com](http://www.gpcpd.com)

(GPCPD members, please log in and then click on the relevant button within the ‘Member information’ box on the right of the home screen to get your discount code)

Did you know that Red Whale courses also support the development of your nursing team? Our GPN Update Course is designed by our GP and ANP team especially for practice-based nurses to boost their knowledge and confidence.

Did you know that Red Whale courses also support the development of your nursing team? Our GPN Update Course is designed by our GP and ANP team especially for practice-based nurses to boost their knowledge and confidence.

This one-day [RCN accredited](http://www.rcn.org.uk) course follows the same evidence-based and fast-paced format as our GP Update course, providing the nurses in your practice with:

- All the latest clinical updates, plus practice nurse specific topics too.
- CPD and online tools designed to fully accord with NMC revalidation requirements
- Improved confidence to support a wider range of patients.
- Robust clinical competencies, giving you confidence in their ability to support you in the day-to-day pressures of general practice.

The GPN Update Course 2016

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As an added bonus, we’re offering this £45 discount code for autumn GPN Update courses.

By entering or quoting code GPN2016A45 at check-out your nurses can claim their place for the price of £150 each.

For more details, and to book, go to [www.gp-update.co.uk/nurses](http://www.gp-update.co.uk/nurses) or call 0118 960 7077.
I would like to come on the following course(s) (please write legibly!):

☐ The GP Update Course  (location).............................................................   (date).........................
☐ The Women’s Health Update Course  (location).............................................................   (date).........................
☐ The Cancer Update Course  (location).............................................................   (date).........................
☐ Lead. Manage. Thrive!  (location).............................................................   (date).........................
☐ The GPN (Nurse) Update Course  (location).............................................................   (date).........................

I can’t attend a course, but would like to order your Handbook or DVD:

☐ GP Update Handbook and 12 month’s access to GPCPD £150
☐ GP Update Handbook, DVD and 12 month’s access to GPCPD £225
☐ Women’s Health Update Handbook £70
☐ Cancer Update Handbook £70

Name...............................................................................   Address...................................................................................................

(Please write your email address clearly as we’ll use it to send your confirmation letter and receipt.)

Price as stated in the flyer for each course. If applicable, please provide your discount code here................................................

Please send this form with your cheque payable to GP Update Limited to:

GP Update, The Science and Technology Centre, Earley Gate, Whiteknights Road, Reading RG6 6BZ

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