

# Knowledge of Folic Acid



## Introduction

The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is an ongoing surveillance system of maternal behavior and experiences before, during, and shortly after pregnancy.<sup>1</sup> This population-based survey is designed to collect data on maternal health and behavior, prenatal and postpartum care, and infant health. The 2008 Florida PRAMS survey had a total of 2,624 respondents. The data presented in this fact sheet are weighted to be representative of new mothers and newborns in Florida.

## Background

Folic acid, also known as vitamin B<sub>9</sub>, helps prevent birth defects of the brain and spinal cord when taken at least one month before becoming pregnant and through at least the first three months of pregnancy.

PRAMS surveys Florida mothers of newborns. One question asks “Have you ever heard or read that taking the vitamin folic acid can help prevent some birth defects?” The following are results of this question from the most recent three years available.

## Results

- Mother’s of newborns knowledge about folic acid’s benefits has increased from 76.5% in 2004 to 79.1% in 2008.
- Non-Hispanic white and Hispanic mothers were the most knowledgeable at 80.5% and 81%, respectively, while 70.6% non-Hispanic black mothers were knowledgeable about folic acid (Figure 1).
- The older the mother is, the more likely she is to know about the benefits of folic acid (Figure 2).
- Approximately 82% of mothers 20 years or older knew about the benefits of folic acid, whereas only 64% of teenage mothers knew. Knowledge about folic acid’s benefits has increased from 52.9% in 2004 to 64.3% in 2008 among teenage mothers.

Figure 1: Knowledge of Folic Acid Benefits by Race/Ethnicity, FL, 2004-2008

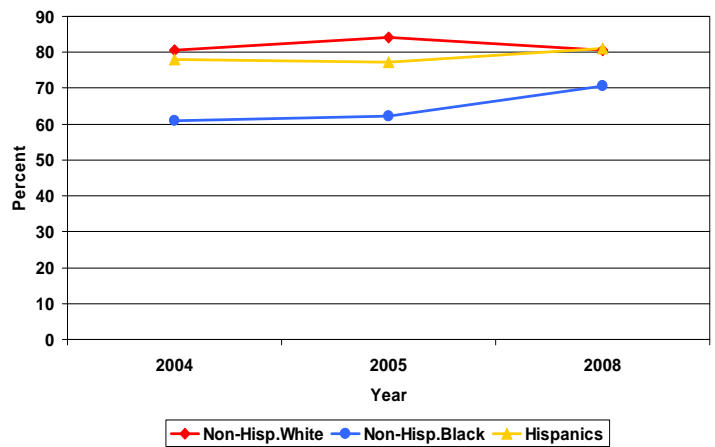


Figure 2: Knowledge of Folic Acid Benefits by Maternal Age, FL, 2008

