

Folic acid urged for women

TORONTO — New guidelines for health-care professionals say certain birth defects could be prevented if women of childbearing age take enough folic acid.

The recommendations were produced by a panel of experts from the Society of

Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada and Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children.

Guidelines recommend eating sufficient amounts of food fortified with folic acid, like spinach, broccoli, corn and oranges. The goal is to further reduce the rates of neural

tube defects such as spina bifida and possibly some other common birth defects.

The guidelines are based on recent research findings that update previous medical knowledge about the link between folic acid and birth defects.

The research indicates some of the most prevalent birth defects could be dramatically reduced if women increased their intake of folic acid and multi-vitamins at least three months before becoming pregnant.

— The Canadian Press