WELLING MEDICAL PRACTICE

**Folic Acid Deficiency**

Your recent blood result shows that you have a low folic acid level. Folic acid (folate) is a vitamin and is needed to make new cells in your body, including red blood cells. Your body does not store very much folic acid. You need a regular fresh supply to keep healthy. A normal balanced diet contains enough folic acid. However, a lack of folic acid may cause anaemia and sometimes other symptoms.

Common symptoms of anaemia caused by folic acid deficiency include tiredness, having little energy (lethargy), feeling faint and becoming easily breathless. Less common symptoms include headaches, heartbeats suddenly becoming noticeable (palpitations), altered taste and ringing in your ears (tinnitus). You may look pale. Other symptoms may include numbness in your hands and feet. Some people may also have depression. However, folic acid deficiency not always cause anaemia and may have no symptoms.

Not eating enough foods containing folic acid (folate) is the most common cause of folic acid deficiency. This occurs most often in elderly people who do not eat well. Alcohol-dependent people are another group often not eating properly. Other people are at risk of folic acid deficiency are pregnant ladies, patients with cancer, patients with gut diseases, blood disorder and some types of medicine reduce the amount of folate in your body, or make the folate harder to absorb. You may lose folate from your body if you urinate frequently because of underlying conditions like heart failure and kidney failure.

We need around 200 micrograms per day of folic acid. We would recommend you eat food rich in folic acid. Good sources of folic acid include: **Fresh, raw or cooked brussels sprouts, asparagus, spinach, kale, broccoli, spring beans, green beans, cabbage, cauliflower, okra, lettuce, parsnips, peas and bean sprouts. Also cooked black-eyed beans, chickpeas, liver (note that pregnant women should avoid liver), kidneys, beef, salmon and brown rice.**

To ensure you are getting the amount of folic acid you need, aim to include

2-3 portions of these sources daily.

Over the counter 400 microgram of folic acid tablets is also a good source of folic acid, This costs approximately £3 for 3 months to purchase.

For condition leaflet please visit the following website:

<https://patient.info/allergies-blood-immune/anaemia-leaflet/folic-acid-deficiency-anaemia>