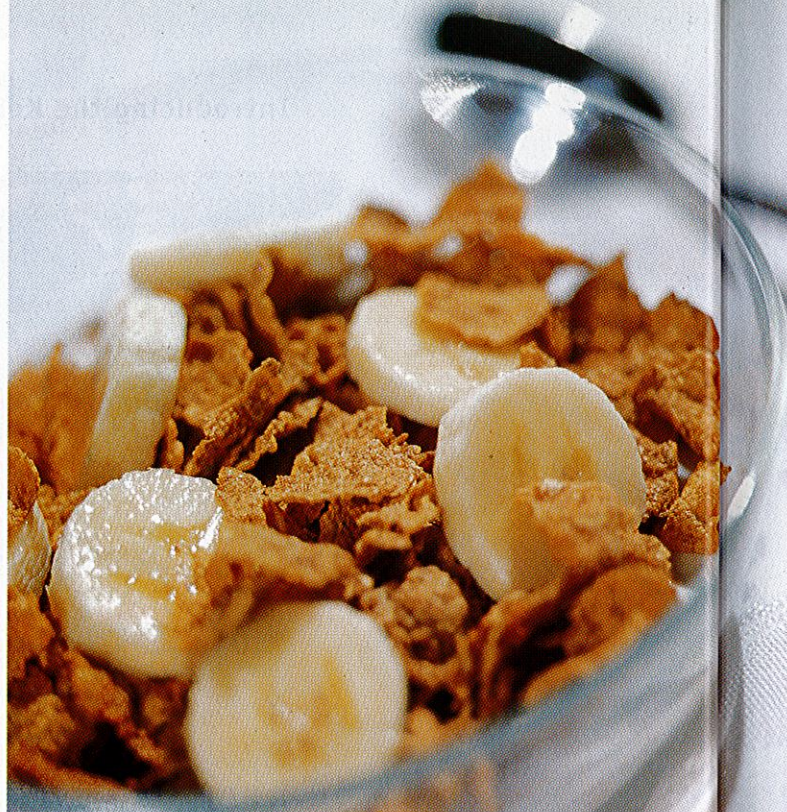


FOLATE: YOUR HEART'S GOTTA HAVE IT

All right, here's some news to make your heart glad: Researchers at the University of Washington in Seattle, after compiling and comparing the results of 38 studies investigating the subject, say that folate—also known as folic acid and folacin—could be your heart's best friend.

Remember when you and your playground buddy used to get on the seesaw and how, when one of you headed skyward, the other headed down? Well, a similar thing happens in your body: When levels of folate rise, levels of the amino acid homocysteine—a major menace that some experts say may be as deadly as cholesterol when it comes to stroke and heart-attack risk—go down.

The trick is working that seesaw so that your levels of folate stay high: You should be getting at least 400 micrograms (or 0.4 milligrams) of this B vitamin every day. You can find it in foods like beans, turnip greens, OJ, and broccoli, but experts say that the best source is fortified cereal or a multivitamin.



A bowl of fortified cereal every day can help keep your folate levels right where they should be.

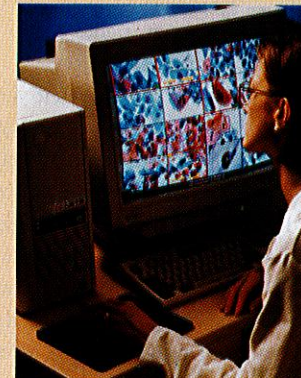
The Pap Smear Gets Computer Backup

At your next annual visit to the gynecologist, ask your doctor to send your Pap smear to a lab that's hooked up—to computers, that is. Two new, computerized methods of double-checking smears make your best weapon against cervical cancer even more powerful.

Both techniques—the Papnet Testing System and the AutoPap 300 QC System—help reduce the incidence of false negatives (abnormal smears mistakenly given the okay), which can range from 5 to 25 percent.

Traditionally, labs rescreen only 10 percent of Pap smears (chosen at random) that pass the first round of testing. With AutoPap, all “passing” smears are scanned by a computer for suspicious cells. In the Papnet system, each smear is displayed on a video

screen, which highlights abnormal cells for a lab technician to evaluate. And while neither method eliminates false negatives (human error is still a factor), the number could be dramatically reduced.



AutoPap is installed at and operated by individual labs, while Papnet-participating labs send smears to an outside testing center, which sends a print of suspi-

cious cells back to the physician.

AutoPap should cost less than \$20 above the price of a Pap smear; Papnet, about \$30 to \$35. For the nearest AutoPap lab call (800) NEOPATH; for Papnet info call (800) PAPNET-4.

Keep Your Newborn Safe From a Silent Scourge

We've all heard about the deadly viruses that have no antidote, but there's one that we can protect our babies against—for a lifetime.

Researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta are recommending routine vaccination of all infants against the hepatitis B virus (HBV), which can be lethal to the liver. Problem is, each state sets its own policy regarding the vaccine, so your school system may not require it. The virus is spread through sexual contact (and shared needles), human bites, blood transfusions—and from mother to child during delivery.

The vaccine schedule for infants is one shot shortly after birth and booster shots at 1 to 2 months and at 6 to 18 months. Epidemiologist Eric E. Mast, M.D., says that the side effects are “very minimal. Common ones are redness and swelling at the injection site.” So ask your doctor about getting your baby inoculated; the cost is around \$100, but insurance may cover some of it. For more info contact the American Liver Foundation at (800) 223-0179 or 1425 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. ♥



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