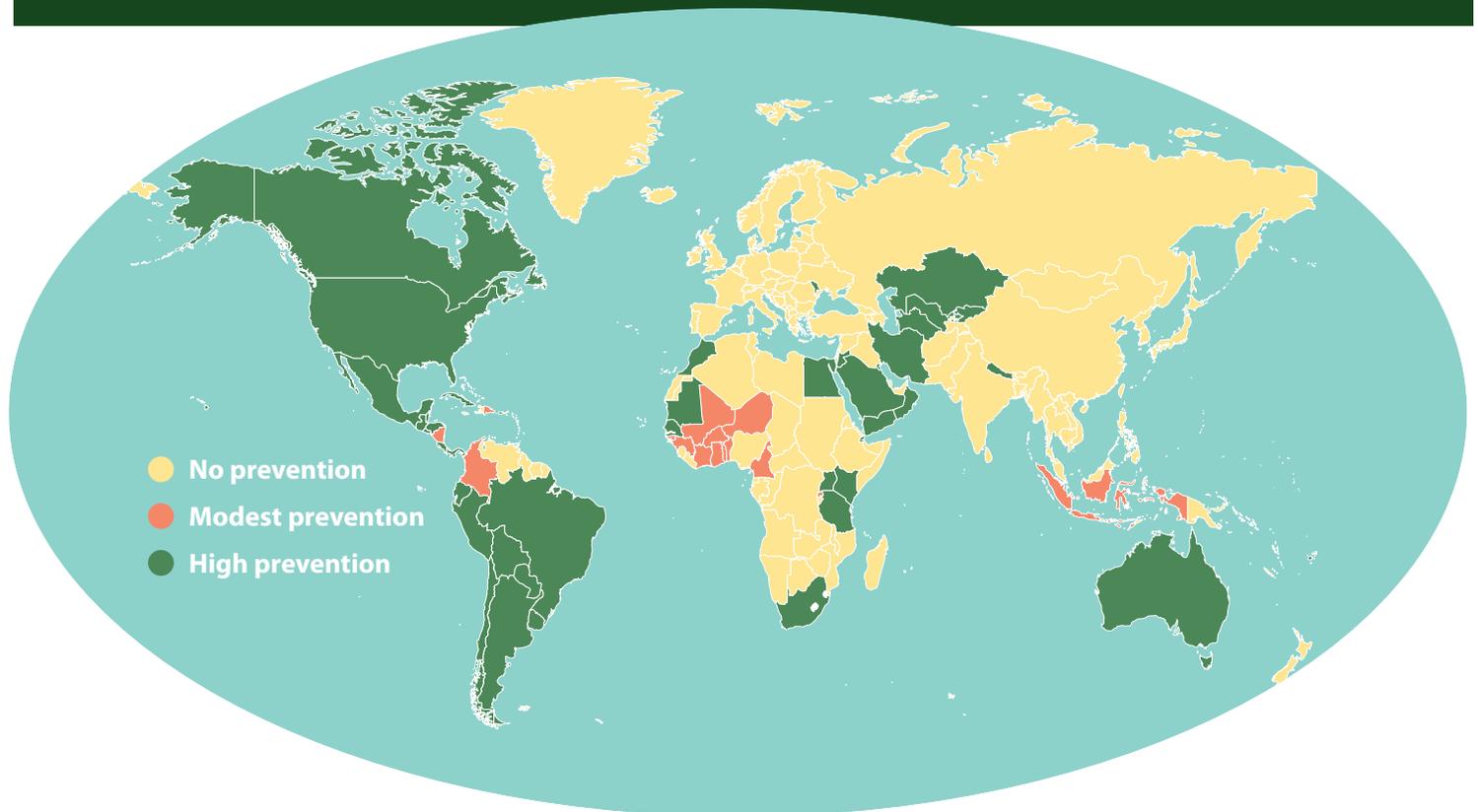


# PREVENT SPINA BIFIDA

“To turn caring into action, we need to see a problem, find a solution, and deliver impact.” —BILL GATES



## GLOBAL STATUS

folic acid-preventable SPINA BIFIDA and ANENCEPHALY

### PROBLEM

**Spina bifida is a preventable birth defect** that affects 200,000 babies per year from all economic and ethnic groups. Each year, this represents 20 times the total number of babies harmed by thalidomide 60 years ago.

### SOLUTION

**Prevention.** Folic acid food fortification is simple, affordable and proven to reduce the most common form of spina bifida. However, only 15 percent of these birth defects are currently prevented worldwide.

### IMPACT

**You can help!** Food fortification can prevent up to 90 percent of infant deaths due to spina bifida. Support the Center for Spina Bifida Prevention in advancing its program of science-based advocacy for folic acid food fortification.



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**FORTIFICATION.** Adding folic acid to centrally processed foods has been shown to be highly effective in preventing spina bifida-F in the United States, Canada and 56 other countries. It can be added to grains (wheat, corn, and rice) during the milling process—easy, safe and cost-effective.

**SAFETY.** The mandatory fortification program in the U.S. provides about 1/3 of the Recommended Daily Allowance—a perfectly safe level. In addition to preventing spina bifida, folic acid fortification has also eliminated folate deficiency anemia and may have resulted in important reductions of first strokes.

**AFFORDABILITY.** Adding folic acid to refined grains in the U.S. is affordable. The cost in the U.S. is about 1 cent per person per year and is estimated to save \$150 in care for every dollar spent.

**WEBSITE.** [preventsbinabifida.org](http://preventsbinabifida.org)

**WHAT IS SPINA BIFIDA?** Spina bifida—and a related disorder, anencephaly—are serious birth defects that occur when a baby’s spinal cord or brain does not develop properly during early pregnancy. Anencephaly babies do not survive, while babies born with spina bifida face a high probability of death in early childhood, require ongoing medical and surgical care, and are often confined to life in a wheelchair.

**HOW DO WE SOLVE IT?** The predominant cause of spina bifida and anencephaly is a lack of adequate folic acid in the mother’s diet prior to conception and during the first month of pregnancy. As early as 18 days after fertilization, the spinal cord begins to develop, so by fortifying food with folic acid, we can reach almost all women and prevent nearly all folic acid-preventable spina bifida and anencephaly, known as SBA-F. With only 58 countries currently mandating food fortification, there is huge potential to prevent these types of birth defects in 100 or more remaining countries.

**TRUSTED LEADERSHIP.** Dr. Godfrey P. Oakley, Jr. MD is the world’s leading expert on the prevention of spina bifida and anencephaly. As former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Division of Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, and current director of the Center for Spina Bifida Prevention (CSBP) at the Rollins School of Public Health, he and his team lead the charge to identify physicians and parents to become champions for spina bifida prevention.



**Godfrey P. Oakley, Jr. MD**  
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**HOW CAN I MAKE A DIFFERENCE? GIVE!** Your generous financial backing will be leveraged to secure grant funding and transformative gifts that can literally save lives. The CSBP will partner with non-governmental organizations, community leaders, and key stakeholders to develop science-based evidence to educate and advocate for governmental policy change that mandates folic acid food fortification. Through technical assistance to industries and governments, the CSBP will support the implementation of folic acid food fortification, monitor its effectiveness, and prevent up to 90 percent of cases in high-burden countries.

**TO SUPPORT CSBP’S EFFORTS TO PREVENT SPINA BIFIDA,** please donate online at [sph.emory.edu/giving](http://sph.emory.edu/giving).

Click on the “Give Now” button and under “Designations” select “Rollins School of Public Health - Center for Spina Bifida Prevention”

**Please make checks payable to**

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