

safe food: Reaching the unreachable, convincing the inconvincible; persuading all sexually active women, not just those planning a family, to take folic acid daily.



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AWARDS

PUBLIC SERVICE, SOCIAL WELFARE &
EDUCATION

BRONZE

COMPANY PROFILE

safe food is a public body whose principal remit is to educate, empower and enable individuals across the island of Ireland to positively influence health behaviours relating to both food safety and healthy eating. They use the best scientific evidence available, along with a robust social marketing approach, to produce clear, realistic, appropriate and independent consumer advice. For this campaign, safe food aimed to educate consumers about the importance of taking folic acid supplements and promote positive behavioural change.

McCannBlue is a creative agency that solves problems. We question, trial and push to make things better, in order to create change. This campaign with safe food was an opportunity to create real and positive change in society, across the island of Ireland.

Mindshare believe fully in an integrated media world, where technology brings new life and opportunity to every medium. For the safe food folic acid campaign, educating and encouraging behaviour change involved creating a digital channel strategy and using technology to target the relevant audience to ensure folic acid information could be seen, shared and acted upon.

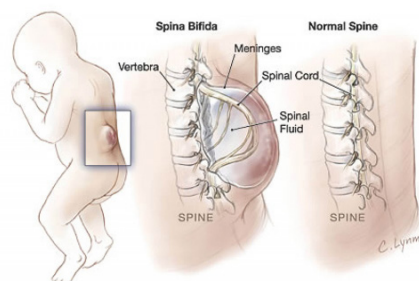
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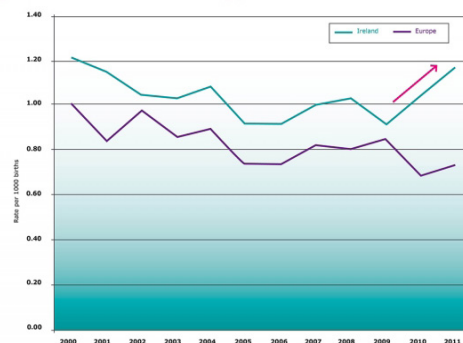
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FIGURE 1
Neural tube defects:
Spina Bifida



Source: Kratina K. Folic Acid: Evaluating the role of folic acid as a critical nutrient for health. 2004. Colorado, Wheat Foods Council. Ref Type: Pamphlet

FIGURE 2
Above average NTD rates in Ireland increase sharply from 2009



Source: NTDs per 1000 births 2000-2011, EUROCAT

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

In 2015, safe food were tasked with encouraging women across the island of Ireland to take folic acid supplements, in order to help prevent Neural Tube Defects (NTDs) in new-born babies. NTDs are severe abnormalities of the central nervous system that develop in babies during the first weeks of pregnancy. The most common of these is spina bifida (meaning split spine), the effects are illustrated in Figure 1.

Ireland has one of the highest incidence rates of NTDs in Europe, with between 0.8 and 1.5 cases recorded per 1,000 births annually or, to put it another way, somewhere between 49 and 93 babies are affected every year^{1,2}. What's even more distressing is that these rates have sharply increased in recent years. (See Figure 2)

A high proportion of us, the Irish population, has a genetic make-up that's vulnerable to the development of NTDs because of the inefficient use of the vitamin folate or folic acid in our bodies³.

A healthy diet will provide enough folic acid for normal bodily function, but women here must supplement it in the early stages of pregnancy to aid the normal development of their baby's spinal cord and brain.

Just one 400mcg folic acid supplement vitamin taken daily, 12 weeks before conception and throughout the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, could potentially prevent two thirds of NTDs⁴, equating to approximately 50 fewer Irish babies born with these conditions every year⁵.

Despite this relatively simple step, recent Irish research showed that 3 out of 4 women attending antenatal care hadn't taken folic acid supplements before becoming pregnant⁶, the main reason being that 1 in 2 pregnancies is unplanned, with many women not realising that they're pregnant⁷.

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Increasing rates of NTDs and low consumption rates of folic acid supplements had to be addressed quickly.

1 McDonnell, R. (2013). *Epidemiology of Neural Tube Defects in Ireland. National Meeting on Neural Tube Defects; George's Hall, Dublin Castle, Dublin, 2013.*

2 Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2013). *Chief Medical Officer Annual Report 2011-12. Northern Ireland: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.*

2 Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, (2013). *Chief Medical Officer Annual Report 2011-12. Northern Ireland: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.*

3 Food Safety Authority of Ireland, (2006). *Report of the National Committee on Folic Acid Food Fortification. Dublin: Food Safety Authority of Ireland.*

4 MRC Vitamin Study Research Group, (1991). *Prevention of neural tube defects: Results of the Medical Research Council Vitamin Study. The Lancet*, 338(8760), pp.131-137.

5 Turner, M. (2015). *UCD Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital, speaking at safefood launch, 21st July 2015.*

6 Cawley, S., Mullaney, L., McKeating, A., Farren, M., McCartney, D. and Turner, M. (2015). *An analysis of folic acid supplementation in women presenting for antenatal care. J Public Health*, 38(1), pp.122-129.

7 Department of Health (2011). *Your Health is Your Wealth – HSE Public Health Policy Framework 2012-2020.*

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MARKETING OBJECTIVES

Commercial Objective

safe food typically only sets behavioural goals, not commercial ones. The behavioural goal here was to increase folic acid supplement consumption amongst all sexually active women with a chance of becoming pregnant. As such, sales of 400mcg folic acid supplements were used as a measure of behavioural change and campaign effectiveness.

safe food engaged the Pharmaceutical Association of Ireland, the Ulster Chemist's Association, their network of pharmacies and finally, manufacturers to measure sales and ultimately the commercial return of the campaign. Sales of folic acid during the four-week period of the campaign (July 20th to August 16th 2015) were compared with sales in the same period in 2014.

Marketing Objectives

The objectives were to change knowledge, attitudes and behaviour relating to folic acid supplements.

To achieve them, three behavioural change techniques from Susan Michie's taxonomy of behavioural change were employed; education, persuasion and enablement⁸.

Role for Communications

Most women have heard of folic acid but there is confusion about what it is, what it does and when, and by whom, it should be taken; all of which creates barriers for behavioural change with regard to taking it. The key misconceptions and myths, in our audience's words⁹, are:

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FIGURE 3
Qualitative quotes on misconceptions and barriers to taking Folic Acid

'Yeah the only association I have with folic acid is that you take it when you're pregnant'

'You wouldn't take it, like, if you weren't planning on getting pregnant. It's, like, half admitting you might get pregnant'

'Like, if I went home with folic acid, I don't think my mother would be too impressed'

'And I think probably is partly my mother never really believed in vitamins either. She felt that if you ate fruit and veg that you know you'd be getting everything'

'What if she didn't take it with her first child? She'd probably think, ere sure, I didn't take them with my first child, why should I start with my second?'

Source: Faughnan, M. F., Cahill, D., Burgoyne, L. N. and Perry, I. J. (2009). Barriers and Facilitators to Taking Folic Acid Supplements among Women Aged 18–30 years. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 68(OCE3). E149.

MARKETING OBJECTIVES

- ▶ You only need to take folic acid when you get pregnant, not before.
- ▶ I'm using contraception, so why bother taking folic acid? (Even though 50% of pregnancies are unplanned)
- ▶ Taking folic acid will give everyone the idea I'm trying for a baby.
- ▶ I'll get all the folic acid I need from food.
- ▶ Folic acid will help make me get pregnant.
- ▶ Vitamins are expensive. (Taking a folic acid supplement costs only a few cents a day) (See appendices i for average cost analysis)
- ▶ I don't want to be taking loads of tablets and vitamins every day. (It only requires one small 400mcg pill per day)
- ▶ My other kids weren't born with NTDs, so any more I have will be fine as well.
- ▶ You can't be thinking negatively like that. Something like that wouldn't happen to me.
- ▶ Sure what good will one little tablet do against something as terrible as spina bifida?

(See Figure 3 For Qualitative Quotes From Female Focus Groups Discussing Folic Acid Supplement Beliefs and Behaviours)

8 Michie, S., Ashford, S., Sniehotta, F. F., Dombrowski, S. U., Bishop, A. and French, D. P. (2011). A refined taxonomy of behaviour change techniques to help people change their physical activity and healthy eating behaviours: the CALO-RE Taxonomy. *Psychology & Health*, 26(11), pp. 1479-1498.

9 Faughnan, M. F., Cahill, D., Burgoyne, L. N. and Perry, I. J. (2009). Barriers and facilitators to taking folic acid supplements among women aged 18–30 years. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 68(OCE3). E149.

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MARKETING OBJECTIVES

Appendix i. Folic acid prices as at 20 July 2015

Retailer	Product	Tablets per pack	Price*	Price per tablet
Hickey's	"Trying for a baby" Seven Seas with folic acid	28	€4.99	0.18c
	Clonfolic	28	€3.75	0.13c
	Clonfolic	98	€6.20	0.06c
Dunnes	Healthpoint Folic Acid	120	€1.99	0.02c
	Seven Seas Pregnancy with folic acid	28	€3.34	0.12c
Boots	Sona Range of folic acid	90	€5.99	0.07c
	Boots Own brand	60	€2.99	0.05c
	Boots Own brand	180	€6.99	0.04c
	Kelkin	60	€4.99	0.08c
	Beeline	90	€6.99	0.08c
	Clonfolic	28	€3.79	0.14c
	Clonfolic	98	€6.39	0.07c
Tesco	Tesco folic acid	90	€0.50	0.01c
	Beeline folic acid	90	€6.65	0.07c
Aldi	Activ – Max Women's Health	180	€0.99	0.01c
Lloyds	Lloyds Pharmacy Folic Acid	90	€3.99	0.04c

All products purchased contain the recommended daily intake 400mcg of folic acid per tablet.

*All purchases made between 17th and 20th July 2015 in Dublin and Kildare and may include retailer discount or promotional pricing instore at that time.

Average price per tablet surveyed: 0.04 cent

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THE TASK

80% of babies born with NTDs survive the newborn phase with the majority (85%) experiencing lifelong disability¹⁰.

Patients with spina bifida often require repeated surgeries to repair the damaged spinal cord. Other complications include hydrocephalus, foot and knee deformities, learning difficulties and chronic bladder and bowel malfunctions.

A child with spina bifida is likely to wear nappies their entire life. If they are lucky enough to walk, they'll be too unbalanced to ever hop, skip, run or climb. A child with spina bifida needs a shunt in their brain to drain cerebral spinal fluid into their abdomen, a job normally done by the spinal cord. Their families must constantly look out for shunt blockages, as the effects would be devastating.

The costs of operations and treatments for children with spina bifida average €500,000 over a lifetime. This means that if 70 – 80 NTD births occur each year, there's a potential annual cost to the health service of €40 million¹¹, a significant sum that could help others.

This was and is a major public health issue.

If two-thirds of NTDs were to be prevented through folic acid uptake, almost 53 less babies could be born with an NTD, resulting in a saving of €26.4 million for the health service.

The sudden and sharp increase in babies born with NTDs¹² in recent years coincided with a decline in folic acid intake amongst pregnant women.

Previous public debate on whether or not to fortify food with folic acid appeared to have added to confusion. In 2013, a recommendation was made by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) not to fortify food with folic acid in Ireland, because there was a need for more EU-wide regulation of this area.

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THE TASK

Unfortunately, media headlines such as 'FSAI says no gain from adding folic acid to food', left many with the misconception that they're actually getting enough folic acid from diet alone¹³.

There had been no mass media communications on folic acid and its benefits since the Health Promotion Agency ran an advertising campaign in Northern Ireland in 1999, which was adapted for ROI in 2000¹⁴.

So, following 15 years of 'radio silence', safefood was tasked with running a campaign, on a small budget of €75,000, targeting women across the island of Ireland, who were unsure or confused about folic acid. There was no new 'scientific silver bullet' to reverse misconceptions; there was no new news at all.

The campaign also had an unreceptive audience issue to overcome, in that half of the audience did not consider themselves the audience. 50% of pregnancies are planned; the other 50% are not, so logic insisted that 50% of our audience would be closed off to a folic acid message.

In short, the challenge was tough and complex: targeting women who don't think unplanned pregnancy will happen to them, and that if it does, they would never have a baby born with any kind of birth defect, let alone something like spina bifida.

¹⁰ Food Safety Authority of Ireland, Department of Health and Children (2006). *Report of the implementation group on folic acid food fortification to the Department of Health and Children*. Dublin: Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

¹¹ Cullen, P. (2015). *Folic acid could prevent 40 spina bifida cases yearly*. *The Irish Times*. [online]. 26 June. Available from: <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/folic-acid-could-prevent-40-spina-bifida-cases-yearly-1.2264444>. [Accessed 30 April 2015].

¹² McKeating, A., Farren, M., Cawley, S., Daly, N., McCartney, D. and Turner, M. (2015). *Maternal folic acid supplementation trends 2009-2013*. *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica*, 94(7), pp.727-733.

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13 McKinley, C. (2013). FSAI says no gain from adding folic acid to food. *The Irish Times*. [online]. 9 September. Available from: <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/fsai-says-no-gain-from-adding-folic-acid-to-food-1.1521397>. [Accessed 30 April 2015]

14 Health Promotion Agency (2000). What is folic acid? [online]. Available from: <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/22214673/what-is-folic-acid-health-promotion-agency> [Accessed 30 April 2015]

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THE STRATEGY

Defining the audience

With approximately 50% of pregnancies unplanned, the target was all sexually active women of childbearing age who could become pregnant.

Specific groups included:

- a. Young women sexually active but not considering pregnancy
- b. Women considering pregnancy
- c. Women who already have children, could become pregnant, but are not taking folic acid
- d. Lower income groups (as incidence rates are higher amongst these women) ¹⁵

Developing the key messages and selecting behaviour change techniques

To bust folic acid myths, our campaign needed to communicate the facts and deliver them through supportive behavioural change techniques:

Increased Knowledge Through Education: Key Facts

- ▶ Folic acid needs to be taken if you are pregnant or planning to get pregnant
- ▶ Folic acid should be taken by all women whether they are trying to get pregnant or not
- ▶ Getting folic acid from fruit and veg is not enough
- ▶ Folic acid does not help you get pregnant

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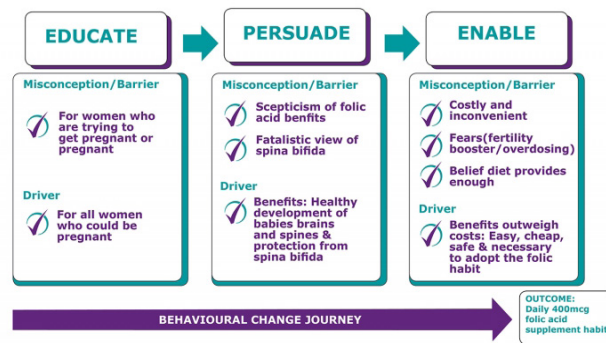
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FIGURE 4 a
Key messages and techniques

INCREASED KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EDUCATION: KEY FACTS
Folic acid needs to be taken if you are pregnant or planning to get pregnant
Folic acid should be taken by all women whether they are trying to get pregnant or not
Getting folic acid from fruit and veg is not enough
Folic acid does not help you get pregnant
ATTITUDE CHANGE THROUGH PERSUASION: KEY FACTS
Folic acid is important for the development of healthy babies
Folic acid protects babies from Spina Bifida
BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE THROUGH ENABLEMENT: KEY Supports
Facilitate open, honest, non-judgemental conversation amongst women
Give women the right information, in the right place along their behavioural change journey (i.e. on social, online, in doctor surgeries and in pharmacies)
Help women adopt a positive daily supplement habit

Source: McCannBlue Strategy, 2015

FIGURE 4 b
Strategic Communications Model – 3 Stage Journey to Behavioural Change



Source: McCannBlue Strategy, 2015

THE STRATEGY

Attitude Change Through Persuasion: Key Facts

- ▶ Folic acid is important for the development of healthy babies
- ▶ Folic acid protects babies from spina bifida

Behavioural Change Through Enablement: Key Supports

- ▶ Facilitate open, honest, non-judgmental conversation amongst women
- ▶ Give women the right information, in the right place along their behavioural change journey (i.e. on social, online, in doctor's surgeries and in pharmacies)
- ▶ Help women adopt a positive daily supplement habit

(See Figure 4a)

The overarching message;

Whether or not you're planning (or even want) to get pregnant: whether it's later this year or later this century, you need to get into the routine of taking folic acid every day.

(See Figure 4b)

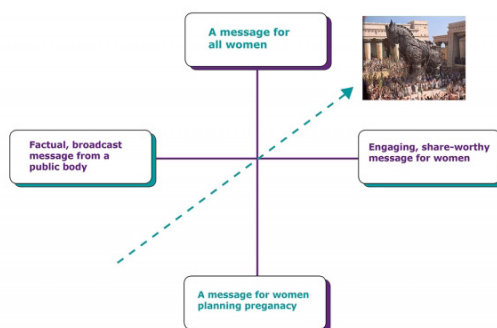
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Figure 5
Strategic Communications Approach – Trojan Horse Engagement



Source: McCannBlue Strategy, 2015

THE STRATEGY

Strategy: Science wrapped in entertainment

Given that 50% of our audience was not in the 'pregnancy-planning zone' and would be closed off to the message, we needed a 'Trojan Horse'. Our planned strategy was to reel our audience in with entertaining content and then, when their minds were open, highlight the factual information we wanted to impart.

We took learnings and inspiration from other public bodies awarded for effectively using a similar 'edutainment' approach, including 'Dumb Ways to Die' by Melbourne Rail Safety¹⁶ and 'Choose A Different Ending – Knife Crime' by The Metropolitan Police¹⁷.

For the other half of our audience in the 'pregnancy planning zone', this approach was important too. While we knew they would be more open to our message, we also knew they would be less likely to discuss and share it, because when it comes to talk of broodiness, pregnancy or family planning, women keep their feelings and plans close and only share with a select and trusted few. Entertaining content gave women in this zone an opportunity to share without revealing their plans¹⁸. (See Figure 5)

¹⁵ Grewal, J., Carmichael, S., Song, J. and Shaw, G. (2009). Neural tube defects: an analysis of neighbourhood- and individual-level socio-economic characteristics. *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology*, 23(2), pp.116-124.

¹⁶ Chan, D., and Mills, A. (2013). *Metro: Dumb Ways to Die*. Retrieved from Warc database.

¹⁷ Warc (2011). *The Metropolitan Police: Knife Crime - Choose A Different Ending*. Retrieved from Warc database.

¹⁸ Warc (2014). *Danone: Karimums - Connecting mums and mums-to-be on the journey*. Retrieved from Warc database.

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THE IDEA AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY

Channel Selection

Digital and social were chosen as key channels through which to educate, persuade and enable.

- ▶ We needed a medium that allowed us to engage and re-engage with women, educating, persuading and enabling, targeting one misconception at a time.
- ▶ We wanted to promote open, stigma-free conversation amongst women. Social networks offered the perfect platform.
- ▶ With a limited budget of €75,000 to develop a campaign for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, online channels offered cost-effective reach and engagement.
- ▶ Building shareability into our content allowed us to drive earned reach beyond paid media.

Pharmacies, retailers and doctor surgeries

- ▶ We wanted to give women our folic acid message at the most critical point of decision-making to enable behavioural change; in-store where they could buy the supplement.
- ▶ Pre-campaign, we contacted 1,362 pharmacies with an e-mail through the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI). We also publicised the campaign via the Ulster Chemists' Association (NI) and the Irish Pharmacy Union (ROI). We also contacted the major pharmacy chains directly in both ROI and NI, as well as major supermarket retailers on the island e.g. Tesco, Dunnes and Asda.
- ▶ We also employed paid media in doctor's surgeries, another important point on the journey to behavioural change.

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THE IDEA AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY

Creative Strategy

We needed a highly engaging creative vehicle to drive our facts-based communication, something very engaging, 'clickable' and 'shareable'. So our Trojan Horse was born of a combination of two of the strongest forces on the Internet: babies... and Irish Mammies.

This practically guaranteed sharing and engagement amongst women across the island of Ireland. (See Figure 6)

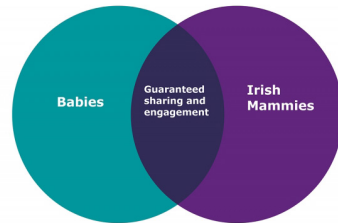
Babies

When it comes to what has high shareability with women, cute and funny is high on the list. And nothing ticks those boxes more than funny baby content, whether or not the woman watching and chuckling has babies of her own. Social channels are swimming with memes featuring babies juxtaposed with humorous copy. It seems that babies have almost become a social currency (See Figure 7). We hoped tapping into this rich vein would connect us with our audience and get them sharing the facts about folic.

Irish Mammies

The Irish Mammy has become a legend in her own teatime (thanks to @ColmORegan). Some of the strangest (and funniest) advice, when it comes to pregnancy and babies, originates from her. Just like some of the misconceptions around folic acid, much of what she has to say isn't just ridiculous, it's downright hilarious. And she happens to be a lot of young mothers' first port of call for advice. Irish Mammy-isms had also become social currency. (See Figure 8) Also, in Irish society, mummies have a licence to tell it straight.

Figure 6
Creative Strategy



Source: McCannBlue Strategy, 2015

Figure 7
Creative Rationale: Babies have become a currency in social

- Baby memes and videos have been a staple of the Internet since the very beginning of viral images/videos. From the famous "Dancing Baby" to "Charlie Be My Finger" to "Success Kid," these are some of the most famous images to have ever hit the web.
- Brands such as Evian pointed to the high "clickability" and "shareability" of babies.
- To date their 2009 Evian Roller Babies video has 82,012,364 YouTube views and their 2013 Evian Baby & Me video has 121,745,998 YouTube views.



Figure 8
Creative Rationale: Irish Mammy-isms are also social currency for our audience

- #IrishMammy used average of 3 times per day.
- @Irishmammies has 206,000 Twitter followers and it has been turned into a bestselling book, mugs, aprons and other merchandise.
- Popularity of Bridget and Eamonn - YouTube videos in excess of 250,000 views (Republic of Telly sketch at the time and now an RTE show on an Irish Mammy & Daddy - first episode viewing figures 197,600).
- The epitome of an Irish mammy: Mrs. Brown: average viewership on RTE of 753,500 in 2011. And 972,000 in 2012.



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FIGURE 9 a
'Babies Know The Facts About Folic' Hub



Source: safefood

THE IDEA AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY

We brought together these two powerhouses of the Internet to develop our creative concept.

“Babies know the facts about folic”

The creative content for this idea was built around babies themselves dispelling the myths about folic acid. Short video pieces were created and spearheaded the campaign. In these videos, the legendary nonsensical wisdom of the Mammy meets the no-nonsense common sense of a child. These short video pieces were produced using still photography coupled with animated elements. This new technique allowed for a very engaging and highly cost-effective creative solution.

The creative elements of the campaign were tested online pre-launch to ensure they appealed to the target audience in both NI and ROI, and communicated the right information in an easy-to-understand way. 57 participants took part in the testing including two participants from SHINE, the charity for NTDs, in the United Kingdom (UK). We wanted to be sensitive to those who had children with Neural Tube Defects. The response was very positive and we were excited that we had an idea which would connect, educate and be passed on ¹⁹.

Use of channels

safefood Website and Inbound and Outbound Marketing Strategy

To dispel misconceptions and encourage behaviour change, we needed a factual, interesting and accessible hub of information to educate and persuade women.

A hub was designed for the safefood website. (See Figure 9a) A quick link to this hub featured on the safefood website homepage for the duration of the campaign.

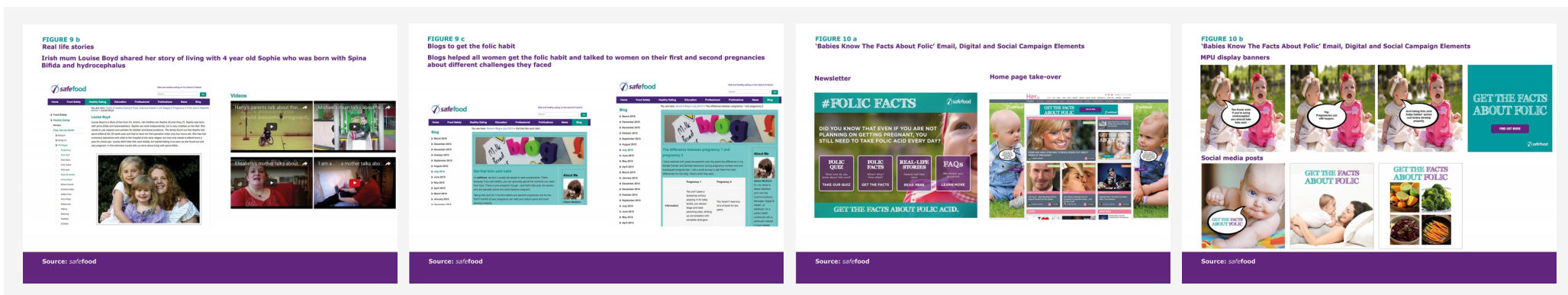
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THE IDEA AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY

This hub included information on:

- ▶ Folic acid facts
- ▶ Folic acid myths
- ▶ A folic acid quiz
- ▶ Real life stories from families who have been affected by Neural Tube Defects (NTDs). (See Figure 9b)
- ▶ Useful blogs on getting into the folic habit. (See Figure 9c)
- ▶ Useful links
- ▶ Folic acid FAQs
- ▶ Social media links for women to discuss and share



This information was pushed out through safefood's newsletter, Twitter and Facebook, with paid spend carefully targeted towards our audience. (See Figures 10a and 10b)

Word of mouth remains globally one of the most trusted sources of information²⁰. Spreading the folic acid message through social media and encouraging sharing and conversation was key.

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THE IDEA AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY

Expert video also featured on the safefood social media channels. These videos featured foetal medicine experts such as Prof. Jim Dornan, Prof. Michael Turner and Dr Rhona O'Mahony, who discussed a range of issues including NTDs, who should take folic acid and why it is important. Healthcare professional opinions gave credibility to the messages.

All advertising communications linked back to this hub where women could find out more information and get help to adopt a positive folic habit.

Digital advertising and search marketing

To ensure reach of the creative vehicle and message, digital display advertising was implemented across a range of high-traffic websites. We placed the message on publisher sites with high daily traffic from the target audience to ensure the message was seen every day (DailyMail, Evoke.ie, Her.ie, and Independent.ie), but also on sites that spoke to specific life stages – weddings and parenting websites and newsletters (EUMom, Shemazing, Weddings Online and NI4Kids). Retargeting and behavioural targeting was also utilised to ensure those who engaged with the advertising would be served additional advertising information. (See appendix ii for full list of websites that featured the display advertising).

A search marketing campaign using keywords relating to folic acid and key life stages for planning conception was delivered through Google AdWords. This ensured interest generated from all marketing was answered with the correct information on the safefood hub.

Public Relations

To launch the campaign, safefood organised events in ROI on July 20th, 2015 and in NI on July 27th, 2015. Twenty relevant influencers including health correspondents, news editors, parenting media, parenting bloggers, beauty media and bridal media attended the ROI and NI events. (See Figures 11a, 11b and 11c).

FIGURE 11 a
Samples of PR Generated

135 pieces of coverage on the island including print, radio and online media. PR ROI worth C249k



FIGURE 11 b
PR Highlights

UTV news covers the importance of folic acid supplements



FIGURE 11 c
Quotes from Healthcare Professionals during the Campaign

"We know that women are somewhat aware of folic acid but with up to 50% of all pregnancies being unplanned, it's so important that all women who are sexually active start taking the vitamin daily, even if a baby is the last thing on their mind. That's because a baby's neural tube develops in the first few weeks of pregnancy when many women may be unaware they are pregnant."

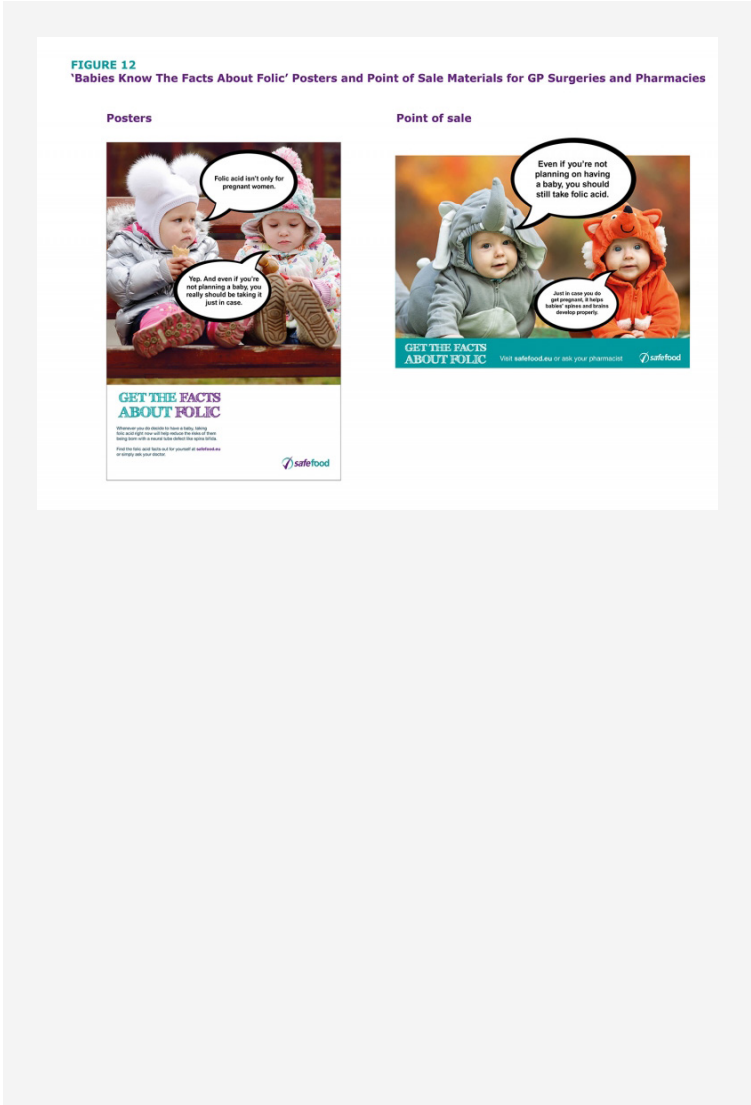
Dr Rhona Mahony, Matron, National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street

"We know from recently published Irish research that three out of four women who attend for antenatal care have not taken folic acid supplements before they become pregnant. Taking folic acid daily as a supplement could potentially prevent two thirds of neural tube defects every year – on average, that's approximately 50 fewer babies affected every year."

Prof Michael Turner, UCD Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital

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THE IDEA AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY

Stakeholder Engagement and Point of Decision Materials

safe food developed a suite of design materials that pharmacies and manufacturers could tailor and print for their own in-store advertising, signposting folic acid more prominently to their own customers (at their own expense, as our small budget was spent). This enabled women to access the right information at critical behavioural decision points. Pharmacies and retailers were also encouraged to share the safe food campaign content through their own social channels like Facebook or Twitter during the campaign. (See Figure 12)

- 19 Safe food. (2015). Analysis of vizzata testing for folic acid campaign.
20 Nielsen Global. (2015). Global trust in advertising. [online]. Available from: <http://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/niensenglobal/apac/docs/reports/2015/nielsen-global-trust-in-advertising-report-september-2015.pdf> [Accessed 30 April 2015].

Appendix ii. Display advertising websites and networks

Site/Network	Environment
Daily Mail	Run of site, Showbiz, Femail
Evoke.ie	Run of site
Her.ie	Run of site
Independent.ie	Style section
Mirror NI	NI and Belfast Live
Belfast Telegraph	Parenting
Electric Media	Fashion, Beauty, Weddings, Celebrity
Yahoo	Behavioural targeting

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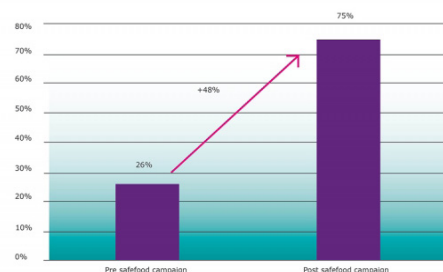
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Figure 13
Sources that advised you or made you aware to take folic acid

	Pre-campaign June 24th - July 7th 2015	Post-campaign Sept 3rd - Sept 13th 2015	% Difference
Via Social Media	2.3%	7.3%	+5.2%
Particular health website	4.4%	5%	+1.2%
Parenting website	8.8%	10.2%	+1.4%

Source: safefood online campaign research n=1300, 2015

Figure 14
Percentage of women who believe all sexually active women should be taking folic acid supplements



Source: safefood online campaign research n=1300, 2015

RESULTS

We monitored both claimed and actual behavioural change through online research of 1,300 ROI and NI women, pre and post campaign, and through pharmacy sales of folic acid during our campaign. So how did the campaign deliver against its objectives?

1. Knowledge Change Through Education

We delivered 5.7 million digital display impressions with total cross-website reach of 903,284 women on the island of Ireland.

Social media posts were seen more than 1,086,000 times (Facebook 830,000, Twitter 256,000) with 25,000 engagements (sharing, commenting, liking these posts). (See Figure 13) The PR campaign generated 135 pieces of media coverage.

75% of women surveyed now believe all women who are sexually active should take folic acid. This figure was at 26% pre-campaign, representing an increase of 48%. (See Figure 14)

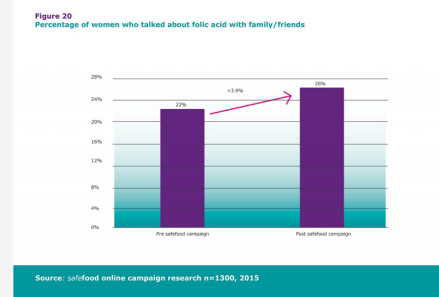
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Conversation was generated around folic acid across the campaign period. On social media, there were 961 mentions of it (of which only 17% originated from safe food). There was a significant increase in Twitter mentions during the campaign. On launch day, 21st July, there were almost 8 times more Twitter mentions (227) of folic acid than on an average day (30). (See Figures 15, 16, 17)

On social media, women began to quote the facts about folic acid and share their own experiences. (See Figures 18, 19)

Importantly, women are now more open to discussing the topic of folic acid with family/friends; an increase from 22% to 26% pre and post campaign). (Figure 20)



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Figure 21
Pharmacies get behind the campaign on Twitter



Figure 22
Percentage of women planning on a pregnancy and not planning on a pregnancy who take folic acid

	Pre-campaign June 24th - July 7th 2015	Post-campaign Sept 3rd - Sept 13th 2015	% Difference
I routinely take folic acid supplements although I am not planning a pregnancy but know that women should take them	7.3%	14.2%	+6.9%
I am currently taking folic acid as I am planning a pregnancy	11.3%	14.5%	+3.2%

Source: safefood online campaign research n=1300, 2015

RESULTS

3. Enablement – Enabling New Behaviours

Messages were promoted through digital channels with all information available on the website. There were 33,481 visits to the folic acid hub.

Of the 1,362 pharmacies that were contacted through the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland mailing list, 42% opened the email and 11% clicked through to the campaign resources. (See appendix iii) Pharmacies were also active on social media promoting the campaign. (See Figure 21)

With regards to new behaviour, an increase of 10% was evident in women currently taking folic acid supplements. This is broken down as follows by those who are and who are not planning a pregnancy. (See Figure 22)

This is a positive starting point in terms of behavioural change.

Commercial sales

Measurement of folic acid supplement sales indicated that consumption had increased. During the campaign period, folic acid sales increased by 26% on average compared to the same period in 2014. (See appendix iv).

Discounting factors

Given the significant increase in claimed positive behaviour change and increase in sales, it is prudent to discount other factors.

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Figure 23
Clonfolic's campaign in support of safefood

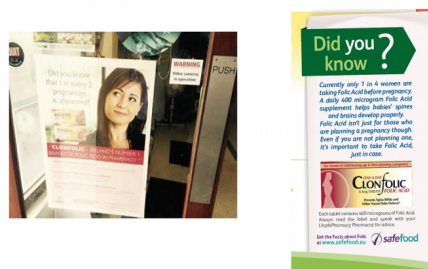


Figure 24
Birth rates 2010 to 2014

2010	75,174	
2011	74,033	
2012	72,225	
2013	68,954	
2014	67,462	-10%

Source: Central Statistics Office

Figure 25
Birth rates Q1-Q3 2014 vs. Q1-Q3 2015

	2014	2015	Difference
Q1	17,699	17,183	
Q2	16,502	16,064	
Q3	17,197	17,128	
	51,398	50,375	-2%

Source: Central Statistics Office

RESULTS

1. Was there any other media coverage or campaigns on folic acid?

safefood's campaign, including the stakeholder outreach, was the only folic acid campaign during this period. Clonfolic, a leading manufacturer of folic acid supplements, got behind the campaign by creating their own posters and radio ads that drove people to the folic facts hub. (See Figure 23)

2. Were folic acid supplements on price promotion anywhere at this time?

There weren't any price promotions on folic acid supplements at this time.

3. Can we attribute the increase of sales of folic acid to an increase in pregnancies at this time?

No, there is no evidence to suggest an increase in pregnancies. In fact, the birth rate has declined 10% from 2010 to 2014 and 2015 Q1- Q3 is down -2% compared to same period in 2014. (See Figures 24 and 25)

Saving to society

1. Economic impact of treating children with NTDs

The cost of treatment for children with NTDs averages €500,000 across a lifetime. With 70-80 NTD births occurring every year, this amounts to a cost of €40,000,000. Potentially, two-thirds of these NTD births could be prevented by women regularly taking folic acid supplements, meaning a saving of €26,500,000. Comparing this potential saving to the safefood campaign marketing budget of €75,000, this would amount to a return on marketing investment of 1:353.

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Figure 26
safefood campaign impact on reducing potential NTD births in those not planning a pregnancy and the associated healthcare savings

7% of women aged 18-45 101 (000s)	50% of this group (50% of pregnancies are unplanned)	Incidence of NTD per 1000 births	Potential NTD babies born to this group	Two thirds of NTD births could be prevented by taking FA	Potential healthcare savings based on €3000 (average treatment costs per NTD case)	ROI
92.82	46.4	0.8	37	24.5	€12,249,600	1:163

Figure 27
safefood campaign impact on reducing potential NTD births in those planning a pregnancy and the associated healthcare savings

3% of women aged 18-45 101 (000s)		Incidence of NTD per 1000 births	Potential NTD babies born to this group	Two thirds of NTD births could be prevented by taking FA	Potential healthcare savings based on €3000 (average treatment costs per NTD case)	ROI
39.78		0.8	32	20	€10,501,920	1:140

Figure 28
Three ROI Scenarios

	COST	ROI
Based on purchasing a 24 week supply for 92,820 women (7%)	€623,750	1:8
Based on purchasing a 12 week supply for 92,820 women (7%)	€311,875	1:4
Based on purchasing a 24 weeks supply of 1% of 18-45 year old (13,260 women)	€89,107	1:1.2

Note: These costs do not factor in the cost of distributing the supplements to women, which would increase ROI

RESULTS

Specifically relating to the results of the safefood campaign, an extra 7% (92,820) of women 18-45 years old (not currently planning a pregnancy) are now regularly taking folic acid supplements. Looking at this 7% of women not planning a pregnancy, and assuming 50% had an unplanned pregnancy, we calculated the potential impact of the campaign. (See Figure 26)

Also, the post-campaign research showed that an extra 3% of women who are planning a pregnancy are now taking folic acid supplements regularly. (See Figure 27)

More modestly, if this campaign prevents even one NTD birth, it is a return on investment of 1:6, i.e. €425,000.

2. Could spending the budget elsewhere have more effectively encouraged women?

With €75,000, safefood could have purchased 22,321 x 12 weekly supplies of folic acid supplements (average cost per supplement per day €0.04). So technically, safefood could have given 22,321 women a 12-week supply of folic acid, or given 11,161 women a 24-week supply.

This might seem like a lot; however, our post campaign research shows that 14% of women 18-45 years old (not planning a pregnancy) claim to be taking folic acid, an increase of 7% from the pre-campaign research. 7% amounts to an extra 92,820 18-45-year-old women on the island of Ireland. (See Figure 28)

This return on investment is calculated based on women taking folic acid for 12-24 weeks, whereas in reality, women would take it 52 weeks of the year, every year – of which the cost would be considerably higher.

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Appendix iii. Participating pharmacies, manufacturers, health stores and retailers

Pharmacies:	Manufacturers:	Retailers:
O'Neills Chemist	Clonfolic	ASDA (NI)
Health Centre Pharmacy	Beeline Healthcare	
McKeevers	Health Stores:	
Clear Healthcare	Viridian Nutrition	
Boots NI	Wholefoods Wholesale	
Lloyds Pharmacy		
Boots ROI		
Sam McCauley		
Hickey's Pharmacy		
Whelan's Pharmacy		

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Appendix iv.

Folic acid supplement sales

Folic acid supplement sales increased by 26% on average from the same period in 2014. The following pharmacies, manufacturers and health stores reported the following sales figures:

Pharmacy/ Manufacturer /Health Store	Sales increased by
Lloyds Pharmacy	30%
Confrey Pharmacy	47%
Wholefood Wholesale	19%
Clonfolic	24%
Beeline Healthcare	10.5%

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IMPACT ON BEHAVIOURAL ACTIVITY AND PAYBACK

There are three key statistics that succinctly indicate the effect the campaign has had on attitudes and behaviour towards folic acid. (See Figure 29)

In addition, the qualitative response to the campaign creative would indicate how it has impacted a change in attitudes. (See Figure 30)

The creative testing also illustrated that a high number of women from the group (28) would be willing to share the videos online. Given the 90-9-1 rule (90% of online users passively consume, 9% of users contribute a little and 1% of users account for all the action)²¹, this is a high level of participation for the safefood campaign.

Importantly, the women agreed that the main reason for sharing the videos was that it is an important message for all women and that advice is the best form of prevention. This is powerful given that these are key messages to encourage new behaviours. (See Figure 31)

This research also proved that our funny babies giving mammy-like advice was another key reason for engaging and sharing the campaign. (See Figure 32)

The commentary on social media would also indicate a positive change in attitude toward folic acid taking, with women encouraging each other to take folic acid and instilling the norm of taking folic acid supplements, regardless of your stage of life. (See Figure 33)

The impact of the campaign has been recognised by experts in this field. (See figure 34)

Figure 29
Three Clear Signs of Behavioural Attitude Shift



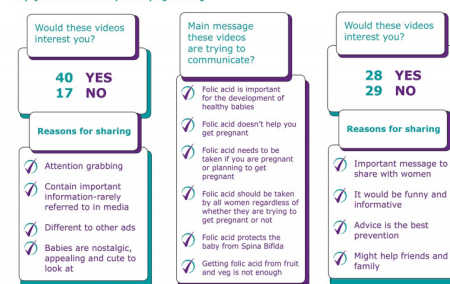
Source: safefood online campaign research

Figure 30
Feedback from Target Audience on Creative



Sources: safefood Creative testing n=57

Figure 31
Key Quotes from online pre campaign testing



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IMPACT ON BEHAVIOURAL ACTIVITY AND PAYBACK

The safefood folic acid campaign has also been recognised by the eGovernment 2016 awards, winning the Marketing Award. The award recognises the pioneering work of digital leaders in the public sector, state agencies and local authorities. Commenting on the safefood “Babies Know the Facts about Folic” campaign, Kathryn O’Donoghue, Director of Ad Quality Operations EMEA, Google said,

“What was really nice about the campaign was not just the use of online channels with offline PR, but also the fact that they used humour to address a very serious issue.”

In conclusion, each objective was met, proven by the research data and sales figures. While this was a short campaign, with immediate visible results, it is in the long term where this campaign will leave its mark. Preventing NTD births will not only improve the health of our children but will also save money, which can be reinvested, to benefit society at large.

It is also important to note that the costs above do not factor the indirect emotional and financial costs of raising a child with a NTD. For example, evidence suggests that caregivers of a child with a NTD worked an average 7.5 to 11.3 hours less per week. In addition, the estimated caregiver time costs for a child with spina bifida until age 25 range from €142,477 to €171,303.

21 Nielsen, J., (2006). *The 90-9-1 Rule for Participation Inequality in Social Media and Online Communities*. [online]. Available from: <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/participation-inequality/> [Accessed 30 April 2015].

Figure 32
Key Quotes from online pre campaign testing



Source: safefood Vizzata testing for folic acid campaign n=97

Figure 33
Sample of Social Media Interactions



Bloggers and Influential people got involved, shared the FACTS and called for taking folic acid to become the NORM FOR ALL SEXUALLY ACTIVE WOMEN. Some even linked back to the safefood site for more information.

Figure 34
safefood's campaign recognised by experts in the field

"As a specialist in women's healthcare and as an academic, I welcome safefood's innovative social media campaign on Folic Acid supplements to prevent neural tube defects. These new communication channels are ideal for reaching young women of reproductive age and unlike other public health campaigns their effectiveness is easily measurable"

- Prof Michael Turner, UCD Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital

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NEW LEARNINGS

Past domestic and international campaigns for folic acid had employed sexual innuendo (Figure 35). But if women in Ireland found discussing pregnancy when it was planned a taboo subject, they would certainly be closed to it when it was the farthest thing from their minds. Instead, we analysed social networks to identify subjects that were culturally relevant, acceptable and popular to share, and used these as vehicles to carry our important message.

We also proved that finding a cost-effective way measure behavioural change, actual as well as reported, was possible and important, if not mandatory.

Figure 35
Sample of International and Past Domestic Campaigns



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SUMMARY

Most women have heard of folic acid, but there's confusion about what it is, does, when it should be taken and by whom; creating barriers to taking it as a supplement.

To address low consumption rates of folic acid supplements that aid the normal development of baby's spinal cord and brain in early stages of pregnancy, safefood busted the folic myths with facts, using two powerhouses of the Internet: babies and Irish mummies.

75% of women surveyed now believe all women who are sexually active should take folic acid, an important message given 1 in 2 pregnancies are unplanned.