



We are recruiting two PhD nutrition students!

Project title: *PREFACE: PREconception Folic Acid Clinical Efficacy trial*

Principal Investigators:

Dr. Kelsey Cochrane, PhD, RD

Assistant Professor

College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, Division of Nutrition

University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Dr. Crystal Karakochuk, PhD, RD

Associate Professor, Canada Research Chair (Tier 2) in Micronutrients and Human Health

Faculty of Land and Food Systems, Food, Nutrition, and Health

University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia

Project summary & aims:

Folic acid supplementation is recommended from preconception until the end of lactation. However, another form of supplemental folate, 5-MTHF, is also approved by Health Canada and is increasingly being used by those who are pregnant and trying to conceive. It is unclear whether these folate forms should be considered interchangeable, as they have different chemical structures and are metabolized differently. **To address this gap, we are conducting a multisite clinical trial in Saskatoon, SK and Vancouver, BC.** Individuals who are trying to become pregnant will be randomized to supplementation with folic acid or 5-MTHF; supplementation will continue until ~1 month postpartum. Our aim is to ensure that supplementation with 5-MTHF is as effective as folic acid in increasing maternal blood folate concentrations throughout pregnancy, and we will evaluate outcomes related to fetal growth and human milk folate composition. Our results will help to confirm the safety and effectiveness of prenatal supplements containing 5-MTHF. This study is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (2023 Fall Project Grant).

We are recruiting for two PhD positions: One PhD student will be based at the University of Saskatchewan, and one will be based at the University of British Columbia.

Skills & qualifications:

- Knowledge related to perinatal nutrition, folate/B-vitamins, one carbon metabolism, pregnancy physiology, fetal growth, and/or human milk
- Clinical trial experience, as evidenced by relevant academic training and scholarly outputs (e.g., peer-reviewed publications)
- Strong organizational and time management skills
- Ability to work independently, find creative solutions, and meet deadlines
- Excellent written (lay and scientific) and verbal communication skills



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Financial support: This is a fully funded position; PhD students will also be expected to apply for internal and external scholarships.

How to apply:

- Please send your CV including information about your previous academic degrees, peer-reviewed publications, courses completed, and abstracts from scientific conferences
- If applicable, please send proof of English proficiency
- *The search is ongoing as of Jan 2025, and will continue until candidates are selected*

Submit your application to Drs. Cochrane and Karakochuk: Kelsey.cochrane@usask.ca and Crystal.karakochuk@ubc.ca; please use the following subject title: PhD PREFACE.

In your e-mail, please indicate whether you have a preference of being based in Saskatoon, SK, or Vancouver, BC, or whether you are open to either location.

We thank all applicants for their interest; only those candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.

All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, in accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be given priority. We are committed to providing accommodations to those with a disability or medical necessity. If you require an accommodation to participate in the recruitment process, please notify us and we will work together on the accommodation.