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the number to 20,000 has failed to reduce net migration and actually led to employers taking on more people from within the EU. introduced because the government genuinely wanted to control the number of people coming into this country. Hard as we can see we simply cannot control the number of people coming in from Europe because that is the nature of European migration. That is the cornerstone of the EU, freedom of movement. If we need people from abroad with those skills then we have to be able to save where they are needed, we need to exceed the limit the government has put forward -- say. Around 2,000 cases of life limiting birth defects such as spina bifida could have been avoided in the UK since 1998, if the Government had followed advice to fortify flour with folic acid. That's the conclusion of research published today. 78 countries, including the United States, add folic acid to cereal grain and flour. Many believe the UK should follow suit. With more, here's our health correspondent, Dominic Hughes. still in the womb and is known as a neural tube defect which can affect the brain. Very often these cases lead to termination, stillbirth, the death of the newborn baby or serious disability. Some protection can come from folic acid, naturally present in some foods, cereals and wholemeal bread. But it is hard to consume enough from purely natural sources, so the Department of Health has been advising pregnant women to take folic acid supplement since 1992. New research suggests as many as 28% of women ignore the advice and don't take folic acid while pregnant. In 1998 the authorities in the US started adding folic acid to flower for bread and since then have seen a

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dramatic fall in babies developing these defects -- flour. If the UK had adopted a similar policy researchers say that since 1998 more than 2000 cases would have been avoided. It is getting to women who are basically healthy before they are pregnant when we have around 50% of pregnancies in this country that are still unclad. It was always a tall order that would need a massive sustained campaign over and over again. No government has really tackled that had long. Successive governments have been advised to follow the US example and introduce folic acid to flour for bread, most recently on October when the Department of Health has said they are still considering the latest recommendations.