

MULTIVITAMINS

Multivitamins are a mixture of vitamins and minerals which are essential for the body to work and stay healthy.

Vitamins are vital substances that are required for normal growth and functioning of the body. They are equally essential for adults and children of all age groups.

We sometimes try multivitamin supplements without knowing what kind of vitamins and minerals we need to take, and the functions of every element and how it affects our body.

We now know that the vitamin and mineral content in our food (especially fruits and vegetables) has dramatically plummeted.

Commercial farming technology and powerful fertilizers that depleted the soil leaving it with little to no mineral content.

If the soil doesn't have minerals, there's no way for vegetables to absorb them.

What Are Vitamins?

Vitamins are nutrients essential for normal growth, vitality and general wellbeing. Without vitamins, many vital bodily functions would not take place and disease might occur.

What Do Vitamins Do?

Vitamins are essential for a number of reasons. In general they: Keep our skin, hair, eyes, bones, teeth, nerves and blood cells normal. Some also assist in processing carbohydrates, proteins and fats. They assist in converting fat and carbohydrates into energy and assist in forming bone and tissue.

Vitamins May Prevent Us from Deficiency Diseases such as:

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Skin disorders (eczema).

- Autoimmune disorders (rheumatoid arthritis, chronic fatigue).
- Allergies.
- Digestive disorders.

The Essential Vitamins

There are two types of vitamins, fat soluble vitamins (vitamins which dissolve in fat) which are vitamins A, D, E and K, and Water soluble vitamins which are B complex, C, and folate (folic acid).

The functions of fat soluble vitamins:

1. **Vitamin A** - Growth, development, shorten duration of disease (cold) enhancement of

our immune system this vitamin is essential for our eyesight, especially night vision, helps with acne and other skin eruptions.

- * Deficiency signs - Night blindness, skin problems with an increase in the rate of acquiring infections, sinusitis, colds and lung infection.

- * Natural sources - liver, kidney, eggs, and fish liver oil, green and yellow vegetables.

2. Vitamin D - This is important for bone formation, it works by controlling calcium absorption and excretion. Helps prevent cold, aids in assimilation of vitamin A. Recent studies show that vitamin D inhibits some forms of cancer growth.

- * Deficiency signs – Rickets, tooth decay.

- * Natural sources – eggs, salmon, sardines, herrings, mackerel, swordfish and other oily fish all contain small amounts of vitamin D

We can /you can avoid vitamin D deficiency if we take short, bursts of sunlight - 10 to 15 minutes of sunshine most days is adequate to produce the body's requirement of vitamin D (avoid peak daylight times, it is important to balance the need for sunshine against the risk of skin cancer)

3. Vitamin E - It works as an antioxidant and has other functions such as improving blood circulation and removing wound scars, helps heart and blood diseases.

- * Deficiency signs - reproductive disorder, premature ageing, and heart disease.

- * Natural sources - wheat germ oil, almonds, sun flower oil, whole grains.

4. Vitamin K - Its major function is its role in the blood coagulation process which prevents our body from bleeding, helps liver function.

- * Deficiency signs - Excessive bleeding or poor blood coagulation action, anemia, celiac disease.

- * Natural sources –eggs. Leafy green vegetables, molasses, soy bean oil.

The functions of water soluble vitamins:

1. Vitamin C - It plays a vital role in the formation of several enzymes, absorption of iron, antioxidant function, formation of collagen (which leads to healthy skin and joints) and wound healing, reduces allergies, aid prevention of infection.

- * Deficiency signs - Scurvy (a disease characterized by bleeding from the gums, bleeding from the skin, fatigue and delayed wound healing), inflammation and infections, stress.

- * Natural sources - Kiwi and citrus fruits, guava, mango, tomatoes, peppers, rose hips, and vegetables.

2. Vitamin B complex - A complex of vitamins that total more than ten individual nutrients; the most essential being B1 (Thiamine), B2 (Riboflavin), B3 (Niacin), B5 (Pantothenic acid), B6 (Pyridoxine) and B12 (Cyanocobalamin).

* Functions - These vitamins play an important role in the body's energy production, nervous system, immune system, and iron absorption.

* Deficiency signs - Vitamin B12 anemia (a disease characterized by fatigue, pallor, an increased heart beat rate and lack of energy). Some other signs include emotional disturbance, skin disease, tongue inflammation and hair loss.

* Natural sources - Meat, liver, milk, yeast and its products, nuts and whole grain cereals.

3. Folic acid – Aids in protein metabolism, essential for formation of red blood cells, coenzyme needed for formation of nucleic acid.

* Deficiency signs - Anemia (a disease characterized by fatigue, pallor, increased heart beat rate and lack of energy) and possible infertility, graying hair, inflammation of the tongue.

* Natural sources - spinach, Brussels sprouts, green beans, cauliflower, brewer's yeast, pumpkins.

What are Minerals?

Minerals are chemical elements that are present in fluids and food. At least 13 minerals are considered essential to maintain good health. Among them are potassium, sodium, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, iron, zinc, and copper. Minerals are even more important and sometimes more difficult to obtain.

The Essential Minerals

The essential minerals which we need to be healthy are calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, sodium, potassium, iron, zinc. The essential trace elements are copper, chromium, manganese, molybdenum, selenium and iodine.

The functions of the most important essential minerals:

1. Calcium - Plays an important role in bone and teeth formation and nervous system health, regulates heart, alleviates insomnia, corrects allergic reactions, and metabolizes iron.

* Deficiency – Osteoporosis, aching limbs, vascular disorders, inflammation and weak bones and nervous system problems.

* Natural sources – milk, cheese, yogurt, sesame seeds, figs, raisins, green vegetables, sardines, sunflower seeds, walnuts.

2. Magnesium – Called the nerve mineral it converts blood sugar into energy, aids calcium and vitamin C metabolism, plays an important role in red blood cell formation,

and protects against heart disease, beneficial in PMS.

* Deficiency - Leads to loss of energy, leg cramp, mental confusion, heart disease, poor teeth.

* Natural sources – sesame seeds, whole wheat, apples, figs, dark green vegetables,

3. Zinc - Essential for growth and development, enhances immune function and wound healing, increases fertility, decreases cholesterol deposits, helps avoid prostate problems.

* Deficiency - Leads to skin inflammation, hair loss, sore throat, delayed growth, enlarged prostate gland, and arteriosclerosis.

* Natural sources - meat, vegetables with leaves, wheat germ, pumpkin seed, brewer's yeast, whole grains, milk and eggs.

The functions of the most important essential trace minerals:

1. Iodine - This is essential for growth and development because it is a component of thyroid hormones, helps burn excess fat.

* Deficiency - goiter (a disease characterized by an enlarged thyroid gland and a decreased heart beat rate), hair loss, lack of energy,

* Natural sources - milk, sea fish, and iodized salt, kelp, seafood, onion.

2. Chromium - Assists in glucose utilization by enhancement of insulin action, helps prevent high blood pressure, aid growth.

* Deficiency - weight loss and an inability to tolerate glucose, arteriosclerosis.

* Natural sources - meat, whole grains and nuts, brewer's yeast, shellfish.

3. Selenium- Works as antioxidant (activates an enzyme in the body called glutathione peroxidase that protects against the formation of free radicals—those loose molecular cannons that can damage DNA), slow down aging, protects against heart disease, protects against certain cancers, prevents dandruff.

Are We Getting Enough Vitamins and Minerals?

Vitamins are found in a variety of food sources. A balanced diet of breads, cereals, fruits, vegetables, red meat, fish, poultry, dairy, legumes, seeds and nuts will ensure that you get a satisfactory amount of the vitamins your body needs.

Unfortunately, today's busy lifestyle often forces people to eat fast food or convenient meals that unfortunately are not rich in the vitamins and nutrients that our body requires.

Another factor as we mentioned earlier is to consider is the quality of fruit and vegetables we consume. Soils are often over-farmed resulting in mineral depletion, especially of selenium and zinc.

Quite often produce is being picked early and not allowed to ripen naturally on the trees, leaving fruit and vegetables even more nutrient deficient.

Multimineral supplements are best taken in the form of combination products because together they work far more effectively than a single vitamin or mineral, no matter how high the dose.

And remember supplements are *not* a substitute for food. It's true you can't get all the vitamins and minerals you need from food, but you *also* can't get everything you need for health from supplements either.

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