

Vitamins and Health Supplements

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Vitamins are extremely important on a daily basis. Everybody needs vitamins to work, grow, and develop properly. The FDA advises that people eat a healthy, balanced diet to receive the necessary amount of daily vitamins and nutrients. Unfortunately, in today's society, nutritional deficiency is almost inevitable. So to compensate, many Americans consume vitamins and other health supplements to optimize health. But there have been recent arguments on whether such supplements actually work. Some argue that they are beneficial and actually do help, but others feel that they can do without them.

Every type of vitamin has a specific function that it performs in the body. The human body requires these vitamins to do many things such as warding off diseases, boosting the immune system, and ridding the body of harmful toxins, just to name a few. But in order to do this, the body must be able to absorb the vitamins and turn them into useful energy, and this is where some speculation arises. Some claim that vitamin supplements (pills in particular) are not fully digested when consumed, thus yielding little to no benefits. One way to make sure that the vitamin supplements are broken down properly is by crushing the pills before ingesting. But the best approach to ensuring that a vitamin supplement is ingested correctly is by taking it with a meal since vitamins and minerals are better absorbed by the body in the presence of fat and protein

Another common complaint about vitamin supplements that some have is that they don't feel the difference that

the supplements are supposed to bring. The problem is that most people just tend to buy the vitamins that are most available or cheapest. But everyone's nutritional profile is different. Recommended intake varies based on age, gender, and even race. You must compare supplements to determine which product is best for you and your lifestyle. It is also helpful to keep these tips in mind when searching for the right vitamin supplement:

- *Avoid supplements that provide more than 100% of the daily value for any vitamin or mineral.*
- *Choose a supplement with no more than 3,000-3,500 International Units (IUs) of retinol or vitamin A.*
- *Men and postmenopausal women should choose multivitamins with 50% or less of the DV for iron.*
- *Don't expect to find 100% of the daily value for calcium or magnesium in a multivitamin. Adding these would make the pills very large.*
- *Look for the USP (United States Pharmacopeia) symbol, a mark of a quality product.*
- *Most additives, such as herbs, are unnecessary and just drive up the price of the supplement.*
- *Supplements designed for certain age groups or sexes tend to be pricier. You can usually find a similar formula in a generic brand.*

An important thing to remember about health and vitamin supplements is that they still are only supplements. In no way are they to replace proper nutrition. They work by complementing your diet to help you receive the nutrients that your body needs. And before you start popping these pills, remember to consult your doctor if taking multiple or large amounts of supplements daily. Taking too much of an individual vitamin or mineral

supplement can be a bad idea because certain nutrients can be toxic in large amounts (also remember that these supplements add to the intake of what you eat from your diet). Just be smart about how you deal with your vitamins, and you can yield the benefits that they are intended to give.

Health supplements help overcome the nutritional deficiencies that plague most people. We need all the nutrients in their proper amounts for optimum health, but since our diets usually fail to provide those amounts, supplements can fill those voids. The main point is that these supplements can help achieve optimum health and minimize risk of disease.

