

“A NCCF Sisterhood Health Fact”
*Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be
in good health, just as your soul prospers. 3 John 1:2*

Vitamins - The Real Story!!

If you scan across the magazine section at the grocery store or book store you will likely see a featured article or ad that recommends a certain vitamin or vitamin supplement that will grow your hair, beautify your skin or nails, give you energy, decrease your appetite, or help your body fight infection! But what is the real story? Well, so glad you asked!

Vitamins are substances found in foods that your body needs for growth and health. There are 13 vitamins that your body needs. Each vitamin has specific jobs. Many of us take a multi-vitamins to ensure that we get all of the recommended vitamins each day. In fact, some people take more of certain individual vitamins to guarantee an ample supply for a particular purpose! However, this over supply of vitamin supplements can end up causing more harm than good. Dr. Donald Hensrud, a physician specializing in occupational and aerospace medicine research at the Mayo Clinic, advises that recent research indicates that some vitamin and mineral supplements thought to be beneficial for disease prevention at one time is now thought to not help at all. A research study of more than 38,000 women, age 55 and over, conducted for over 20 years showed that the best practice to promote health and prevent disease is adequate nutrition. “Studies have consistently shown that diets high in antioxidant-rich fruits, vegetables and other plant foods are associated with lower rates of cancer and heart disease” (Hensrud, 2012).

Although adequate nutrition can supply the vitamins we need, there are certain vitamin supplements that are recommended for specific populations:

Women of Childbearing Age

Women of childbearing age need 400 to 800 mcg or micrograms of folic acid every day, even if there are no plans to become pregnant. Folic (FOH-lik) acid is a B vitamin that helps the body to make healthy new cells. For women that do become pregnant, their babies will be less likely to have birth defects. Folic acid can be supplied by vitamin supplement and diet. The best food sources of folic acid are: leafy vegetables, citrus fruits, beans (legumes), and whole grains. Folic acid is also in foods labeled “enriched,” such as breakfast cereals and whole grain bread.

Older Adults

The recommended intake of calcium is 1,200 mg daily for women over the age of 50 and for men over the age of 70 to support bone health. Vitamin D supports bone health and also enhances calcium absorption. 600 to 800 IU daily from both diet and supplements is recommended for older adults. It's estimated that up to 15 percent of older adults are deficient in Vit B12. Since Vit B12 has not been shown to cause harm, even in large doses, it may be beneficial for older adults to take a B-12 supplement containing at least 2.4 mcg, the Recommended Dietary Allowance, to help prevent deficiency. Good sources for Vit B12 are: Milk, eggs, liver, poultry, clams, sardines, flounder, herring, eggs, blue cheese, and cereals.

So talk with your doctor to find out his or her recommendation specifically for you regarding vitamin supplements.

Resources:

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/fitness-nutrition/how-to-eat-for-health/vitamin-and-mineral-supplements.html>
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/search/search>