

## Health & Beauty

By Julie Jacobs



### Eat Your Veggies— and Pop a Vitamin Too

If you're all grown up and still pushing that broccoli to the side of the plate, you're not alone. Nearly 80% of Americans don't eat the recommended daily amount of fruits and veggies. Even those who do may not get enough vitamins and minerals, in part because processing strips nutrients from food. The solution? Take a daily multivitamin.

In a 2002 policy reversal, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* concluded that a healthy diet does *not* provide sufficient vitamins and minerals—and recommended supplements for all adults.

What should they contain? According to the nonprofit Dietary Supplement Information Bureau, we need: Vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, Niacin, B6, folic acid, B12, C, D, E, Panthothenic acid, calcium, phosphorous, iodine, iron, magnesium, copper, and zinc. But consult your doctor because your nutritional needs vary with age, life stage, and health issues. Folic acid—proven to help prevent birth defects—is most critical for women who are pregnant or of childbearing age.

Here's a quick reference guide to what vitamins do:

- Vitamin A:** Promotes healthy cell reproduction and good vision; sources include liver, dairy, squash, and green leafy veggies.
- Vitamin B:** Boosts the nervous and immune systems, and reduces some cancer risks; eat turkey, tuna, potatoes, bananas, and lentils.
- Vitamin C:** Guards against free radicals and produces collagen; eat fruits and vegetables to get your fill of C, especially broccoli and citrus fruits.
- Vitamin D:** Helps calcium absorption and may inhibit breast, prostate, and colon cancers. Found in eggs, fortified milk, beef liver, and fatty fish, such as salmon.
- Vitamin E:** Repairs the skin and increases immune function. Found in nuts, seeds, vegetable oils, avocados, asparagus, and cucumbers.

### Are Supplements Good for Kids?

The American Academy of Pediatrics does *not* recommend vitamins for children older than 1 unless they have a chronic disease, eating disorder, or certain other conditions. A February 2009 study reported in *Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine* found that youngsters under 4 can suffer kidney or liver damage from an overdose of supplements. However, since kids typically don't eat a varied, healthy diet (unless mac and cheese covers every need), ask your pediatrician about lower-dose supplements. ▲

For more information, contact the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, or visit [www.best-vitamin-supplements-guide.com](http://www.best-vitamin-supplements-guide.com) and [www.supplementinfo.org](http://www.supplementinfo.org).

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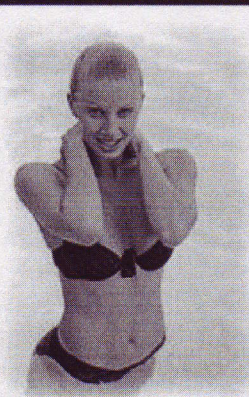
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