

Smart Supplementation

Mulling Over Multivitamins

by Shawna Page

These days it's nearly impossible to find the necessary level of nutrients in our food alone. The mineral content in our soils has diminished over the years due to increases in pollution and pesticides. Certain forms of cooking actually destroy vitamins and minerals in food. Hormones in our dairy, meat and poultry pose their own risks, and lower the food's overall nutritional value. It has become necessary to supplement our diet with a multivitamin - and even better a multivitamin with antioxidants.

Antioxidants are phytochemicals, vitamins and other nutrients that protect our cells from damage caused by free radicals. They are believed to be effective in helping to prevent cancer, heart disease, stroke and a variety of other ailments associated with natural aging. Specifically, antioxidants help us by destroying harmful free radicals that lie inside the human body.

When our body cells use oxygen, they naturally produce free radicals that can cause damage. Free radicals found in blood vessels -- caused by things including deep-fried foods, cigarette smoke, and air pollution -- change the structure of the bad low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol so it becomes more susceptible to clogging the arteries and causing heart problems. Sunlight and air pollution can create free radicals in your eyes by damaging retinal or corneal cells which can lead to cataracts and blindness. Free radicals in skin cells can damage cell DNA, raising the risk of skin cancer and accelerating wrinkle formation. Left unmanaged, free radicals can damage cell walls, genetic material within cells and other cell structures, and over time such damage may lead to disease. Antioxidants act as "free radical scavengers" and hence prevent and repair their damage. Health problems such as heart disease, macular degeneration, diabetes and cancer may all be contributed to by oxidative damage.

A well-balanced diet is the best way to give our body the antioxidants it requires but unfortunately, in our Western society, a perfect diet may be hard to achieve. Proper supplementation with high quality vitamins, minerals and antioxidants can help to ensure that your body receives all that it requires for good health and aging.



Single Dose Disadvantage: Bodies weren't designed to use nutrients in one large single dose. Research has proven that eating smaller, more frequent meals allows for better absorption of the nutritional value of food. The same premise applies to vitamins. For example, vitamin C is a water-soluble vitamin. The body can't store it and its lifespan in the body is relatively short. This limits the effectiveness of a one-a-day multi and ultimately leaves us unprotected much of the time. A more effective strategy is to use a multi that is taken in divided doses during the day.

Tablet versus capsule: Tablets take a long time to dissolve and sometimes don't dissolve at all. Capsules, on the other hand, dissolve quickly allowing the body to absorb every nutrient. Look for vegetable capsules, as they do not contain potential impurities associated with traditional beef and pork-based gelatin capsules.

And remember: Multivitamins do not replace healthy eating, but rather supplement an already healthy diet.

Shawna Page

~ is the founder and CEO of femMed, the all natural solution for women's most common health problems.

