

Vitamins & Minerals: What are they and what Do they Do?

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Editorial

Micronutrients are vitamins and minerals found in food that help to nourish and sustain your health. They are essential for your overall well-being. The best way for your body to get what it needs to be balanced is to eat foods rich in vitamins and minerals every day. However, studies consistently show that most Americans' diets are deficient in vitamins and minerals. Adult Americans, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), do not get enough of the following nutrients: Magnesium, fibre, calcium, potassium, Vitamins A, C, D, and E all contain. Try to incorporate more of these nutrients in your daily diet. It's best to get these nutrients through food, instead of just taking a multivitamin. This is because it is easier for your body to absorb micronutrients through food. Calcium is a mineral that is present in, it is needed for the development of strong bones and teeth in childhood and adolescence. Calcium is necessary to maintain bone mass as an adult. According to the USDA, the average American adult can consume 1,136 milligrammes of calcium per day (based on a 2,000-calorie diet).

Potassium is a mineral found in many foods. Potassium-rich foods help the body maintain a stable blood pressure level. The average American should eat 4,044 milligrammes of potassium per day, according to the USDA. Magnesium is a nutrient that helps your body produce energy, and helps your muscles, arteries, and heart work properly. According to the USDA, the average American adult should get 380 milligrams of magnesium each day.

Vitamin A is associated with vision development and cellular growth and maintenance. Adults should get 700-900 micrograms of Vitamin A per day. Vitamin C helps the body form collagen (which is the main protein used as connective tissue in the body) in blood vessels, bones, cartilage, and muscle. Adults should get 65-90 milligrams of Vitamin C per day.

Your body needs vitamin D so that it can absorb calcium to promote bone growth and maintain strong bones and teeth. The average adult needs 600 International Units (IU) of vitamin D each day. Older adults (ages 70 and older) need 800 IU each day. Most people get some level of vitamin D through exposure to sunlight. However, using sunscreen will decrease your exposure to vitamin D. Vitamin E is an antioxidant, which is a nutrient that helps fight damage to the cells in the body. Adults need 15 milligrams of vitamin E per day. Not having enough vitamins and minerals may have significant health implications. Malnutrition may be caused by a general lack of nutrients. It's also easier to spot and handle this. It's more difficult to detect a vitamin or mineral deficiency, but it's just as harmful. Vitamin deficiency can be life-threatening in some cases. It's also possible to have too many of certain vitamins in your system. Overdosing on vitamin A during pregnancy, for example, can affect the baby's growth in the womb. As a result, it's important to consult your doctor before beginning any supplement regimen. If you're pregnant or have a health problem, this is particularly important.

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