



Even though a vast majority of health and nutrition experts claim we should be able to obtain all the nutrients we need for a healthy body and mind from our diet, this is proving not to be the case based on the latest research. Two reasons for this could be declining nutrient levels in the soil (mainly from intensive farming practices) and our food is processed, stored, and cooked. That said, with some many supplements now available to us both online and over the counter – do we really need them and are they just as good for us as the natural sources?

The Department of Health only recommends the use of supplements for the following groups:

- Children aged 6 months – 5 years.
- Mums to be prior to conception and for the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.
- Pregnant/breast feeding mums.
- Over 65's.
- Housebound/those with darker skin.

If you do feel the need to take supplements, or you are in the recommended groups then be smart about it:

ALWAYS:

- ✓ Talk to your GP or pharmacist before taking any supplements.
- ✓ Buy from a reputable source.
- ✓ Take them with water or orange juice (if you are taking iron, avoid grape juice as it inhibits absorption).
- ✓ Store them in a cool, dry, dark place.

DO NOT:

- ✗ Buy online unless it's from a recognised UK retailer (contents vary dramatically – it's been found that some supplements bought online have been 'bulked' out with talc, and other harmful substance, also licensing laws are different around the globe).
- ✗ Exceed the recommended dose unless directed to by your GP or pharmacist. Too much of with water-soluble nutrients (vitamins B, C & Folic Acid) will pass through the body and be excreted. Fat-soluble nutrients (A, D, E, K) are stored in the liver and fat tissues; this puts tremendous strain on your liver and could result in you feeling ill.
- ✗ Double up on your next dose if you forget or miss one.
- ✗ Take with tea, coffee or any caffeinated drinks as caffeine & tannins interfere with absorption.

Our bodies are designed to absorb and digest real food rather than the isolated (and mostly synthetic) nutrients found in supplements. So, there is NO substitute for a balanced diet and a healthy active lifestyle.

The Natural way

The table below shows you some of the Herbs and Spices you could add into your diets and what their potential benefits are for the body:

| Herb/Spice | Uses |
|----------------|--|
| Rosemary | May prevent damage to blood vessels and aid with heart health. May also aid indigestion and reduce muscle & joint pain when applied to the skin of the affected area. |
| Parsley | Very high in antioxidants and vitamins A & C and can help to reduce blood pressure (hypertension). |
| Ginger | Effective for gastrointestinal issues. It can also act as a powerful anti-inflammatory and has been shown to reduce joint pain. |
| Cinnamon | Cinnamon bark is claimed to have both antibiotic and anti-inflammatory properties. Can help with gastrointestinal issues and appears to have an antioxidant effect and can help lower blood pressure. |
| Cayenne Pepper | Capsaicin (the active substance in peppers that gives them their heat) is thought to have a thermogenic effect and aid weight loss by decreasing calorie intake and lowering blood fat levels. |
| Black Pepper | Contains a substance called "piperine" and is thought to have a similar effect to capsaicin. It may also inhibit the formation of new fat cells. It also helps the body to better absorb the nutrients in your food. |
| Cardamom | Thought to increase fat burning by improving the body's metabolism and is also thought to be an aid to digestion. |

The table below shows you some of the Vitamins & Nutrients you need and how much you need either from your diet or supplements. This is based on Government Dietary Recommendations 2019 for ages 19-64.

| Nutrient | Good For | Daily Dose Male | Daily Dose Female | Need to Know | Which Food? |
|------------------|---|--------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| Vitamin A | A healthy respiratory tract Fighting infection Plump, youthful skin Night vision | 700 mg/day | 600 mg/day | Choose one with beta-carotene as your body can convert this to Vitamin A when needed | 25g Liver Pate 50g Cooked Haggis 180g Baked sweet potato |
| Vitamins B2 & B6 | Hair, nails, skin, and eyes Regulating hormones Mood Healthy red blood cells | 1.4 mg/day | 1.2 mg/day | If your urine turns bright yellow then you are getting/taking too much! | 150g Pork fillet + 30g Bran Flakes + 150g pot of yoghurt |
| Vitamin B12 | Nerves, blood cells preventing anaemia & energy | 1.5 mg/day | 1.5 mg/day | If you take too much this can lead to high BP, headaches & dizziness! | 150g Pork fillet + 30g Bran Flakes + 150g pot of yoghurt |

The Natural way

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| Nutrient | Good For | Daily Dose <i>Male</i> | Daily Dose <i>Female</i> | Need to Know | Which Food? |
|------------|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Folic Acid | Heart health A healthy foetus Repairing & making DNA Red blood cells | 200 mg/day | 200 mg/day | Alcohol & antibiotics can deplete your levels of this. | 80g Brussel sprouts + 80g leaf spinach ***combine with vitamin B12 for better results*** |
| Vitamin C | Fighting infection Healing wounds Healthy bones, teeth & skin Regulating cholesterol | 40 mg/day | 40 mg/day | Look for 'magnesium ascorbate' on the label – this is much gentler on your digestive system | 1/2 Red pepper 1 large orange 125g Watercress |
| Vitamin D | Bones & teeth Muscle function Mood Immune system | 10 mg/day | 10 mg/day | Between April & October, try to get 15 mins of daily sun exposure (if the British weather allows!!) | 140g Salmon steak 2 boiled eggs 155g can of pilchards |
| Calcium | Strong bones & teeth Muscle & nerve function Helps lower blood pressure | 700 mg/day | 800 mg/day | Calcium citrate is easier to absorb than calcium carbonate | 1 can of sardines + 200ml skimmed milk. Calcium & magnesium work together so try to combine foods containing both. |
| Iron | Energy Immune system Brain function | 8.7 mg/day | 14.8 mg/day | If taking supplements upset your stomach, try getting it from your diet, but if you must supplement choose iron in the form of ferrous fumarate or ferrous gluconate | 40g Shreddies + 100g Lamb's liver + 140g (shelled) mussels |
| Potassium | Regulate fluid balance, muscle contractions & nerve signals. Preventing muscular cramp. May reduce blood pressure & water retention. | 3500 mg/day | 3500 mg/day | Low potassium can lead to muscle cramps, weakness, heart problems & digestive problems | Bananas, sweet potatoes, beetroot, and many beans are a good source of potassium. |
| Selenium | Fertility Antioxidant protection Metabolism Immune system | 75 mg/day | 60 mg/day | Intake of this in the UK as fallen a lot so be sure to include plenty of these food sources | 25g Brazil nuts 75g crab meat 30g Lamb's kidney |