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The Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) for vitamins reflect how much of each vitamin most people should get each day.The RDA for vitamins may be used as goals for each person.How much of each vitamin you need depends on your age and sex. Other factors, such as pregnancy and your health conditions, are also important.The best way to get all the daily vitamins you need is to eat a balanced diet that contains a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, fortified dairy foods, legumes (dried beans), lentils, and whole grains. Dietary supplements are another way to get the vitamins you need if the food you eat is not supplying enough vitamins. Supplements can be helpful during pregnancy and for special medical problems.If you take supplements, do not take more than 100% of the RDA unless you are under a provider's supervision. Be very careful about taking large amounts of fat-soluble vitamin supplements. These include vitamins A, D, E, and K. These can build up in your body and may cause harmful effects.Page 2Markell M, Siddiqui HA. Vitamins and trace elements. In: McPherson RA, Pincus MR, eds. Henry's Clinical Diagnosis and Management by Laboratory Methods. 24th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2022:chap 27.Mason JB, Booth SL. Vitamins, trace minerals, and other micronutrients. In: Goldman L, Schafer AJ, eds. Goldman-Cecil Medicine. 26th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2020:chap 205. Page 3A simple rash is called dermatitis, meaning inflammation of the skin. Contact dermatitis is caused by things your skin touches, such as:Chemicals in elastic, latex, and rubber productsCosmetics, soaps, and detergentsDyes and other chemicals in clothingPoison ivy, oak, or sumacSeborrheic dermatitis is a rash that appears in patches of redness and scaling around the eyebrows, eyelids, mouth, nose, trunk, and behind the ears. If it happens on your scalp, it is called dandruff in adults and cradle cap in infants.Age, stress, fatigue, weather extremes, oily skin, infrequent shampooing, and alcohol-based lotions aggravate this harmless but bothersome condition.Other common causes of a rash include:Eczema (atopic dermatitis) – Tends to happen in people with allergies or asthma. The rash is generally red, itchy, and scaly.Psoriasis – Tends to occur as red, scaly, patches over joints and along the scalp. It is sometimes itchy. Fingernails may also be affected.Impetigo – Common in children, this infection is from bacteria that live in the top layers of the skin. It appears as red sores that turn into blisters, ooze, then for a honey colored crust over.Shingles – A painful blistered skin condition caused by the same virus as chickenpox. The virus can lie dormant in your body for many years and re-emerge as shingles. It usually affects only one side of the body.Childhood illnesses such as chickenpox, measles, roseola, rubella, hand-foot-mouth disease, fifth disease, and scarlet fever.Medicines and insect bites or stings. Many medical conditions can cause a rash as well. These include:Page 4Dimulos JGH. Dermatologic surgical procedures. In: Dimulos JGH, ed. Habibi's Clinical Dermatology: A Color Guide to Diagnosis and Therapy. 7th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2021:chap 27.High WA, Tomasini CF, Argenziano G, Zalaudek I. Basic principles of dermatology. In: Bologna JL, Schaffer JV, Cerroni L, eds. Dermatology. 4th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2018:chap 0.Pfenninger JL. Skin biopsy. In: Fowler GC, eds. Pfenninger and Fowler's Procedures for Primary Care. 4th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2020:chap 26. Page 5Gallani D, Wheeler AP, Neff AT. Rare coagulation factor deficiencies. In: Hoffman R, Benz EJ, Silberstein LE, et al, eds. Hematology: Basic Principles and Practice. 7th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2018:chap 137.Hall JE, Hall ME. Hemostasis and blood coagulation. In: Hall JE, Hall ME, eds. Guyton and Hall Textbook of Medical Physiology. 14th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2021:chap 37.Neff AT. Von Willebrand disease and hemorrhagic abnormalities of platelet and vascular function. In: Goldman L, Schafer AJ, eds. Goldman-Cecil Medicine. 26th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2020:chap 164. Page 6Bhatt MD, Ho K, Chan AKC. Disorders of coagulation in the neonate. In: Hoffman R, Benz EJ, Silberstein LE, et al, eds. Hematology: Basic Principles and Practice. 7th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2018:chap 150.Neff AT. Von Willebrand disease and hemorrhagic abnormalities of platelet and vascular function. In: Goldman L, Schafer AJ, eds. Goldman-Cecil Medicine. 26th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2020:chap 164. Page 7Chernecky CC, Berger BJ. Prothrombin time (PT) and international normalized ratio (INR) - blood. In: Chernecky CC, Berger BJ, eds. Laboratory Tests and Diagnostic Procedures. 6th ed. St Louis, MO: Elsevier Saunders; 2013:930-935.Lee GM, Ortel TL. Antithrombotic therapy. In: McPherson RA, Pincus MR, eds. Henry's Clinical Diagnosis and Management by Laboratory Methods. 24th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2022:chap 43.Schafer AJ. Approach to the patient with bleeding and thrombosis. In: Goldman L, Schafer AJ, eds. Goldman-Cecil Medicine. 26th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2020:chap 162. Page 8Blood is made up of two parts: Fluid (plasma or serum) Cells Plasma is the fluid part of the blood in the bloodstream that contains substances such as glucose, electrolytes, proteins, and water. Serum is the fluid part that remains after the blood is allowed to clot in a test tube.Cells in the blood include red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets.Blood helps move oxygen, nutrients, waste products, and other materials through the body. It helps control body temperature, fluid balance, and the body's acid-base balance.Tests on blood or parts of blood may give your provider important clues about your health. Vitamins and minerals are nutrients your body needs in small amounts to work properly and stay healthy.Most people should get all the nutrients they need by having a varied and balanced diet, although some people may need to take extra supplements. This guide has information about:Use these links to find out what these nutrients do, how much of them you need, how to ensure you get enough, and what the risks are if you take too much. There are 3 types of units used to measure amounts of minerals and vitamins:Milligrams – a milligram is 1 thousandth of a gram and is usually spelt out as mgMicrograms – a microgram is 1 millionth of a gram and is usually spelt out as µg or mcg. 1,000 micrograms is equal to 1 milligram.International Units, which are sometimes used to measure metabolic processes. Basically, they keep us healthy and help our bodies to function. We get vitamins and minerals from the foods we eat. For most of us, a healthy and varied diet (that includes all 5 food groups) is all we need to stay healthy. It is best to get vitamins and minerals from eating a variety of healthy unrefined foods. Vitamins and minerals can cause toxicity if consumed in large amounts. Types of vitamins and their functions Vitamins and minerals are a form of nutrient (called micronutrients) that are needed in small amounts. Although micronutrients don't give us energy, they are involved in the metabolic processes that enable us to get energy from carbohydrates, protein and fat, which are also known as macronutrients. Different vitamins serve different purposes and contribute to different bodily functions. There are 13 vitamins in total and 8 of these come from the B-group of vitamins. Vitamin A Vitamin A is important because it: Food sources of vitamin A There are different compounds with vitamin A activity in animal and plant foods. Plant foods can be easy to spot as they tend to have orange/yellow pigment known as beta-carotene. Plant sources include: orange and yellow fruit and vegetables – such as carrots, red capsicum, mangoes, sweet potatoes, apricots, pumpkin and cantaloupe leafy green vegetables – such as spinach, peas and broccoli. Animal sources include: liver eggs some fortified milk and milk products (with added vitamin A). Vitamin A deficiency risks Because of the various roles that vitamin A plays in the body, deficiency can have several health effects. These include: increased risk of infections night blindness and irreversible blindness (xerophthalmia) excessive keratin build-up of the skin. Vitamin B B-group vitamins help our bodies use the energy-yielding nutrients (such as carbohydrates, fat and protein) for fuel. Some B-group vitamins are needed to help cells to multiply by making new DNA. Except for B-12 and folate which are stored by the liver, most B-group vitamins can't be stored by the body. They must be consumed regularly in a healthy diet that includes a range of wholefoods (such as lean meat, fish, wholegrains, fruit, vegetables and legumes) and limits the intake of alcohol and processed foods. The 8 types of vitamin B are: thiamin (B1) riboflavin (B2) niacin (B3) pantothenic acid (B5) pyridoxine (B6) biotin (B7) folate or 'folic acid' when included in supplements (B9) cyanocobalamin (B12). A person who has a poor diet for a few months may end up with B-group vitamins deficiency. For this reason, it's important that adequate amounts of these vitamins be eaten regularly as part of a well-balanced, nutritious diet. Vitamin C Dietary intake of vitamin C (from food and drinks) is essential, because the human body cannot make this vitamin from other compounds. We also need to have vitamin C as a regular part of our diet because the body cannot store vitamin C for very long. Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) is important for many metabolic processes, including: Collagen formation – collagen is used in different ways throughout the body. Its primary role is to strengthen the skin, blood vessels and bone. The body also relies on collagen to heal wounds. Antioxidant function– the metabolism of oxygen within the body releases molecular compounds called 'free radicals', which damage cell membranes. Antioxidants are substances that destroy free radicals, and vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant. Iron absorption – the process of iron absorption is aided by vitamin C, particularly non-haem iron (found in plant foods such as beans and lentils). Infection fighting – the immune system, particularly cells called lymphocytes, requires vitamin C for proper functioning. Other roles – vitamin C is used to produce other important substances in the body such as brain chemicals (neurotransmitters). Dietary sources of vitamin C Adults need about 45mg of vitamin C per day and any excess amount (above 200mg) is excreted. Vitamin C is sensitive to heat, so some of its nutritional benefits can be lost during cooking. Raw foods are more beneficial as dietary sources of vitamin C. These include: fruit – oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruits, blackcurrants, mangoes, kiwifruits, rock melon, tomatoes and strawberries vegetables – particularly green vegetables (such as cabbage, capsicum, spinach, Brussels sprouts, lettuce and broccoli), cauliflower and potatoes. Vitamin C deficiency and scurvy A severe lack of vitamin C can lead to scurvy. We may think of it as a disease of the past, but it does still exist. Factors or lifestyle issues that may increase your scurvy risk include: regularly eating unhealthy foods crash dieting – especially being on diets that exclude certain food groups being malnourished due to inadequate care very strict allergy diets having an eating disorder smoking – smokers need more vitamin C to cope with the extra stress on their body. Scurvy symptoms The onset of symptoms of scurvy depends on how long it takes for the person to use up their limited stores of vitamin C. Scurvy is usually easy to treat – symptoms are like many other mild complaints and may include: fatigue and generally feeling unwell loss of appetite nausea and diarrhoea fever painful joints and muscles small 'pinpoint' bleeding around hair follicles visible in the skin. If you or someone you care for is at risk, please see your doctor. Vitamin D Vitamin D is important for strong bones, muscles and overall health. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun is necessary to produce vitamin D in the skin and is the best natural source of vitamin D. Regular physical activity also assists with the body's production of vitamin D. The body can only absorb small amounts of Vitamin D. Spending too much time in the sun may increase your risk of skin cancer. Remember to use daily sun protection, especially at times when UV index levels are at their highest (3 or above). Food sources of vitamin D Only a small amount (around 5-10% of Vitamin D is sourced from our diet. Sources include: fatty fish (such as salmon) eggs margarine and some milks have added vitamin D. Vitamin D deficiency It is important to achieve a good peak bone mass early in life. Vitamin D deficiency can result in a decline in bone density in adult life, increasing the risk of: Treatment options include improved sunlight exposure, diet, exercise, vitamin and mineral supplements. If you are concerned about vitamin D levels, see your GP. Your GP may recommend vitamin D supplements, which should be taken strictly as directed. Vitamin E Vitamin E is an antioxidant that helps protect your body against damage from free radicals, such as exposure to cigarette smoke or radiation. It is also important for our: vision immune system skin. Dietary sources of vitamin E Vitamin E is best obtained from a healthy diet that contains plenty of fresh minimally processed foods. Vitamin E is also vulnerable to heat (especially cooking methods such as deep frying. Dietary sources include: Vitamin E deficiency Deficiency is rare but can happen in people with diseases that cause fat malabsorption (like cystic fibrosis). Erythrocyte haemolysis is another deficiency – it's seen in infants born before vitamin E is transferred to them from their mother prior to birth. Vitamin K Vitamin K is important for: healthy bones blood clotting and wound healing newborn babies to prevent a serious bleeding condition called haemorrhagic disease of the newborn (HDN). Dietary sources of vitamin K We get vitamin K from food and the bacteria in our gastrointestinal tract. Newborn babies are given a booster to increase their vitamin K levels because they are born without bacteria in their gastrointestinal tract. We get much of our vitamin K from our diet. Food sources include: leafy green vegetables – spinach and kale fruits – such as avocado and kiwi fruit some vegetable oils – such as soybean oil. Vitamin K deficiency Vitamin K deficiency is unlikely except when fat is not absorbed properly or when certain medications are used. For example, antibiotics can kill the gastrointestinal bacteria that produce vitamin K. Additionally, anticoagulant drugs (or blood thinners) may cause problems with vitamin K in the body. Check with your doctor if you have any concerns. Types of minerals and their functions There are hundreds of minerals – they are usually classified as either major or trace minerals. Although the amount you need differs between minerals, major (or macrominerals) are generally required in larger amounts. Some examples include calcium, phosphorus, potassium, sulphur, sodium, chloride, magnesium. Trace minerals (microminerals), although equally important to bodily functions are required in smaller amounts. Examples include iron, zinc, copper, manganese, and iodine selenium. Some of the important minerals to keep us healthy are listed below. Calcium Calcium is vital to keep our bones strong and healthy. If you don't get enough calcium, your bones will eventually become weak and brittle and can lead to conditions like osteoporosis. Calcium helps: strengthen bones and teeth regulate muscle and heart function blood clotting transmission of nervous system messages enzyme function. Food sources of calcium At different life stages, our calcium needs vary. It is better to get calcium from foods than from calcium supplements. Good sources of calcium include dairy foods like milk, yoghurt and cheese and some plant-based foods with added calcium (for example, soymilk, tofu and breakfast cereals). Other sources of calcium include almonds, bok choy, kale, parsley, broccoli and watercress. Iodine Iodine is essential to make thyroid hormones. These hormones control your metabolic rate (the rate your body uses energy when it is resting). They also help your brain and body grow and develop. Food sources of iodine We only need a very small amount of iodine in our diet. Iodine is found naturally in foods such as: dairy products seafood seaweed (kelp) eggs some vegetables. Iodine can also be found in iodised salt. All bought breads (except organic) in Australia are fortified with iodised salt. You are likely to be getting enough iodine through your diet. However, if you are deficient and need to take a supplement, be guided by your doctor. Too much iodine can be harmful, especially if you have an underlying thyroid disorder. Iron Iron is an important mineral that is involved in various bodily functions, including the transport of oxygen in the blood the provision of energy to cells. It also vital to help our immune system function effectively to fight infection. Food sources of iron Iron can be found in animal and plant foods including: red meat and offal fish poultry legumes eggs breakfast cereals with added iron. Iron deficiency Iron deficiency is common and can affect adults and children. Around one in 8 people do not consume enough iron to meet their needs. Some factors such as certain foods and drinks can affect how much iron your body absorbs. Also, some groups are more at risk of iron deficiency, such as babies and young children, teenage girls, women with heavy periods, vegans and vegetarians and people with chronic conditions. Zinc Zinc is an important mineral involved in various bodily functions – growth and development as well as immune function. Zinc also helps to produce the active form of vitamin A and transports it around the body. Food sources of zinc Zinc is highest in protein-rich foods but may also be found in some plant foods. Dietary sources include: red meat shellfish poultry milk and cheese whole grains cereals with added zinc. Magnesium Magnesium is important due to its many functions in the body – including maintaining bone health and using glucose for energy. Magnesium also supports immune function and helps regulate blood pressure and lung function. Food sources of magnesium Dietary sources include: nuts (such as cashews) legumes dark green vegetables seafood whole grains chocolate and cocoa. Potassium Potassium is important for the nerves, muscles and heart to work properly. It also helps lower blood pressure. Food sources of potassium Our bodies are designed for a high-potassium diet, not a high-salt diet. Food processing tends to lower the potassium levels in many foods while increasing the sodium content. It is much better to eat unprocessed foods – such as fruit, vegetables and lean meats, eggs, fish and other healthy, everyday foods. Foods high in potassium include: bananas and apricots mushrooms and spinach nuts and seeds. Be guided by your doctor, some people with kidney disease, or who are taking some medications, need to be careful not to get too much potassium in their diet. Sodium A small amount of sodium is important for good health as it helps to maintain the correct volume of circulating blood and tissue fluids in the body. Most of us are consuming far more sodium than we need. In fact, many Australians are consuming almost double the amount required. Too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure (hypertension) and other health conditions. Food sources of sodium Salt is the main source of sodium in our diet. It is a chemical compound (electrolyte) made up of sodium and chloride. Many foods – wholegrains, meat and dairy products – naturally contain small amounts of sodium, while highly processed foods usually contain large amounts. Vitamin and mineral deficiencies and supplements The fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K can be locked away in the liver and body fat, and stored for a long time. The water-soluble vitamins, including B-complex and vitamin C, are mostly only stored for a shorter period. A vitamin deficiency takes weeks or months before it will affect your health. For instance, it would take months of no vitamin C before you developed scurvy.



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