

Are Vitamins & Supplements Really Necessary?

You could ask this question to 100 different people in the health and wellness field and get 100 different answers. Some will say yes, as most people don't eat all the right foods and the concept of the Standard American Diet (SAD) is ridiculously antiquated. Others will say no. Your body makes what it needs and your diet provides the rest. Or better yet, I love it when they say "it just gives you expensive urine". Whichever side of the fence you are on regarding this issue you are neither right or wrong. Supplementation is as individualized as an exercise or weight loss program. It is not one size fits all. Having said that, I do believe **how** you take your supplements does matter and we will touch later on that subject.

When I work with clients on this issue it is usually because they are not feeling as well as they use to. They may be experiencing fatigue, memory loss, not sleeping well, tingling or numbness in their extremities. In today's environment there are so many external factors that affect our health that we really have to fight back using all the tools in our arsenal. Supplementing with vitamins/minerals is just one of those tools. Some of those stressors on our body are difficult to eliminate such as air pollution, heavy metals, and in some cases our water supply. However, others such as general stress/worry, being overweight, eating too much sugar we can change and we should! Vitamins and certain healthy detoxification regimens are great to help minimize or eliminate these issues.

There are 13 essential vitamins your body cannot and does not make. [They are Vitamins A, C, D, E, K, and the B vitamins \(thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, biotin, vitamin B6, vitamin B12, and folate\)](#). Therefore, if your body does not make them you have to take them. This can be done by eating all the right foods and their appropriate quantities every day, or supplementing your diet with vitamins to help ease the stress on your body. Most people, especially as we age, do not eat all the right foods in the right quantity; therefore supplementing with the appropriate vitamins often work better.

Are all supplements created equal? We all know they are not. Before I became a Wellness Consultant/Health Coach I was the EVP for a brokerage firm working with hospitals & physicians in the procurement of their malpractice insurance. Weekly we would review various claims for different clients. One in particular that has stood out in my mind for over 20 years is a patient who went to their physician for stomach pains. In an effort to diagnose their problem an abdominal X-ray was done. It showed several tiny images similar to small rocks or stones. Turns out it was undigested vitamins. The physician later found out they were taking Centrum. If you read the label of this product you will find blue, red and yellow dye as well as hydrogenated oil. (Hydrogenated oils are oils that are often healthy in their natural state, but are quickly turned into toxins through the manufacturing and processing they undergo. They are heated anywhere from five hundred to one thousand degrees, which completely changes the composition.) Why would that need to be in our vitamin? The obvious problem with this type of product is that it is extremely difficult for your body to breakdown and absorb.

I always recommend to my clients that supplements, when possible, be taken in an isotonic form. This means that it is the same osmotic pressure as the fluids in your body, i.e. your plasma, tears, sweat. When it is ingested to your stomach it is immediately recognized as a substance that does

not need to be broken down any further. The pyloric valve, opening from the stomach to the small intestines, opens and into the small intestines it goes for absorption. This all occurs within about 10 minutes. Supplements should be all natural with no fillers or binders. For maximum absorption, always take vitamin D with K2, and Calcium with vitamin D.

In summary, eat a balanced diet, get at least 30 minutes of cardio a day with strength training at least 2 days per week, and supplement your diet in the areas you are deficient. If you are not sure where you might be deficient an all natural isotonic multi vitamin would be a great start. It is always suggested that you schedule an appointment with your primary care physician, and have him complete the appropriate blood work to help make that assessment. I am also available if you have any other questions or specific issues you would like to discuss further.

To your good health!