

NUTRIGRAM

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POLICY CHANGE: Our current policy on making reservations for your 'Eat Well...Stay Well' congregate dining site meals has changed. This information is provided to you in order to make for a smooth transition. We will now be asking you to sign up for an entire week at a time and your site director will be calling in the counts on Tuesdays. This change is to ensure that the kitchen has enough time to order the needed food and have adequate time to prepare the meal. This new reservation form, listing all the meals in a one-week period, will be set out for you to sign up as soon as possible. If you know you have an appointment on a specific day, do not sign up for that day. This will also help eliminate our 'meals not used', which amounts to roughly \$60,000.00 every year from meals ordered - but not used.

Vitamins, Minerals and Supplements: Do You Need to Take Them?

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Most of us know that good nutrition is important for good health. However, when we hear buzzwords such as "calcium deficiency" or learn that a new multivitamin just hit the shelves, it can make us wonder if the food we are eating is enough. Hint: It likely is.

Taking a daily dose of any of the single minerals, vitamins or multivitamin/mineral supplements that line the shelves of supermarkets and drug stores can be tempting. According to the **2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans**, "Nutritional needs should be met primarily from foods. Individuals should aim to meet their nutrient needs through healthy eating patterns that include nutrient-dense foods ... [which] contain essential vitamins and minerals and also dietary fiber and other naturally occurring substances that may have positive health effects." **While there may be a need to supplement our diet at certain times in our lives, the safety of taking a supplement also needs to be considered.** Too much of some vitamins and minerals can cause health issues; and, therefore, recommended levels should not be exceeded.

Who needs supplements? As it turns out, the best way to stay healthy is to choose a wide variety of nutritious foods from all five **MyPlate** food groups. Nutrient deficiencies are not common among Americans, but for varying reasons, some people cannot reach the recommended nutrient amounts without using supplements and/or including fortified foods. In addition to a balanced diet, those individuals may need nutrient supplements depending on their situation. For example, older

adults, pregnant women and people who are food insecure are at increased risk of nutrient deficiencies.

In addition, if you are eating less than 1,600 calories each day because you have a poor appetite or you have trouble eating because you have been using alcohol or drugs, discuss the need for supplements with your doctor or registered dietitian nutritionist.

Some individuals are limited in their food choices due to allergies, a medical condition or because they are following a vegetarian or vegan diet. For example, animal foods are the main source of vitamin B12, so people who follow a vegan diet need to eat fortified foods and/or take a supplement.

As people age it can be difficult to get enough vitamins B12 and D. Luckily, this is one of the cases where supplements can make a difference. Getting B12 from fortified foods or taking it alone or as part of a multivitamin/mineral can help raise B12 in your blood. If you're taking calcium or a multivitamin/mineral, choose one that also has vitamin D.

Other groups who may require additional supplementation include people who are taking certain medications or have a health condition that changes how their body uses nutrients, and individuals who have been told by their doctor they have a specific nutrient deficiency.

Your doctor can order tests to help determine if taking a supplement would benefit you. The results might show that you are low in a certain nutrient or you might discover that you're doing just fine. Additionally, review your current diet. An RDN can help you evaluate the foods you eat and make recommendations to meet your personal needs.

Remember, real food contains healthy things a pill can't give us. When we take a nutrient out of a food and concentrate it in a pill, it's not quite the same thing. Be sure to consider your individual situation and consult a doctor or an RDN before considering supplements. *Academy of Nutrition and Science.*



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