

An Editorial Note on Multivitamin in Human

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Editorial

A multivitamin is a preparation intended to serve as a dietary supplement with vitamins, dietary minerals, and other nutritional elements. Such preparations are available in the form of tablets, capsules, pastilles, powders, liquids, or injectable formulations. In healthy people, most scientific evidence indicates that multivitamin supplements do not prevent cancer, heart disease, or other ailments, and regular supplementation is not necessary. Many multivitamin formulas contain vitamin C, B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B7, B9, B12, A, E, D2 (or D3), K, potassium, iodine, selenium, borate, zinc, calcium, magnesium, manganese, molybdenum, beta carotene, and/or iron. Multivitamins are typically available in a variety of formulas based on age and sex, or (as in prenatal vitamins) based on more specific nutritional needs; a multivitamin for men might include less iron, while a multivitamin for seniors might include extra vitamin D. Some formulas make a point of including extra antioxidants. Some nutrients, such as calcium and magnesium, are rarely included at 100% of the recommended allowance because the pill would become too large. Most multivitamins come in capsule form; tablets, powders, liquids, and injectable formulations also exist. In the United States, the FDA requires any product marketed as a "multivitamin" to contain at least three vitamins and minerals; furthermore, the dosages must be below a "tolerable upper limit", and a multivitamin may not include herbs, hormones, or drugs.

For certain people, particularly the elderly, supplementing the diet with additional vitamins and minerals can have health impacts; however, the majority will not benefit. People with dietary imbalances may include those on restrictive diets and those who cannot or will not eat a nutritious diet. Pregnant women and elderly adults have different nutritional needs than other adults, and a multivitamin may be indicated by a physician. The amounts of each vitamin type in multivitamin formulations are generally adapted to correlate with what is believed to result in optimal health effects in large population

groups. However, these standard amounts may not correlate what is optimal in certain subpopulations, such as in children, pregnant women and people with certain medical conditions and medication. Technically, a multivitamin is a supplement that contains more than one vitamin; but in common parlance, a multivitamin is a supplement that contains many vitamins and essential minerals, as a form of insurance against any potential deficiencies. Current evidence suggests that, in high-income countries, multivitamins reduce the risk of the fetus being small for its gestational age, as well as the rate of defects in the fetus's neural tube, urinary tract, cardiovascular system, and limbs. The quality of the evidence isn't very high, however, so those findings are still tentative.

Conclusion

Despite all the research on vitamins and health, we have only a handful of rigorous scientific studies on the benefits of what Dr. Sesso calls a "true" multivitamin: a pill that provides essential vitamins and minerals at the relatively low levels that the body normally requires. Multivitamin advocates point to the lack of any strong proof that taking a multivitamin for many years is dangerous. "While I agree that the likelihood of harm is small, the likelihood of a clear health benefit is also very small—and also we have no clear proof yet of such benefit," says Dr. Guallar, a scientist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. If your doctor has directed you to use this medication, your doctor or pharmacist may already be aware of any possible drug interactions and may be monitoring you for them. Do not start, stop, or change the dosage of any medicine before checking with your doctor, health care provider or pharmacist first.

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