

Complete Health Truths

Exploring natural health by getting back to the basics.

Steps to Choosing a Good Vitamin

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When purchasing a vitamin supplement follow these guidelines:

1. **USP Standards:** United States Pharmacopeia means the products you are taking will dissolve within 30-45 minutes of ingesting them.
2. **GMP Standards:** Good Manufacturing Practices means the vitamin is regulated by pharmaceutical (drug) company standards, under go periodic inspections, and follow strict control of procedures and documentation.
3. **High RDA's Levels:** Recommended Daily Allowances, was established in the 1930's as the minimal amount of supplementation needed to avoid pellagra, scurvy, and rickets. The RDA's are continually changing. Recently Vitamin D was doubled due to the lack of it in most people's diets. Therefore, you should choose a supplement that says 50% DV or more. Research suggests that the higher the percentage the better your chances of are reducing and minimizing diseases.
4. **Pass on Liquid Supplements:** most companies claim that liquid supplements absorb faster, but yet 90% of drugs given to people are in tablets. Even aspirin is in a tablet form. Also, many nutrients are absorbed at the same rate regardless if they are in tablet or liquid form.
5. **Read the Label:** (Read below for more tips on this)
 - a. Watch out for synthetic ingredients
 - b. Look for low and high quality nutrients (some are better absorbed than others)
 - c. Look for multiple nutrients as some nutrients are more easily absorbed if another nutrient is present
6. **Check the *Comparative Guide to Nutritional Supplements*:** this book was created by Lyle McWilliams, a researcher in Canada to help consumer choose a nutritional supplement easily. Each supplement is rated on a number scale, 0 being low and 5 being high. Only 4 companies received their 5 star standard award. They are Creating Wellness Alliance, Douglas Laboratories, TrueStar Health, and USANA Health Sciences. The recent edition compared 1500 products. He also created a guide for children's vitamins which compares 500 products. (*Contact Christina if you would like to know the ranking of your vitamin.*)
7. **Don't Base Your Decision on Price:** Did you ever consider that most people will spend hours researching, saving, and test driving a car before they buy one---but when it comes to buying a vitamin, people choose the cheapest ones on the shelf. We only have one body and one life. How much is your health worth to you?
8. **Compare Products to One Another:** when you look at the label compare the RDA levels of different products, you will see dramatic differences between them (choose the one with higher RDA levels)
9. **Check to see if your vitamin is listed in the Physicians Desk Reference.** Doctors use this book to determine which drugs should be given to their patients for certain symptoms. The book is several inches thick. Currently only USANA Health Sciences' Essentials is listed in the drug section of the PDR.

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What Does This Mean?

Natural: nutrients come from vegetable, mineral, or animal sources that undergo little or no processing and retain most of their nutritional value. Examples are fish liver oil and all minerals.

Natural Source: nutrients are from vegetable, mineral or animal sources but undergo processing. Examples are vitamins A and D from fish liver oil, vitamin E, lecithin, digestive enzymes, protein powders and amino acids.

Nature “Identical”: laboratory-manufactured nutrients that are identical in structure. It is more costly or difficult to extract the same nutrients from all-natural sources, which would make them too expensive or scarce. Examples are vitamin C and the B vitamins.

Synthetic: are laboratory-manufactured nutrients that are not similar to the natural nutrient. For example, vitamin E cannot be copied exactly. Synthetic vitamins are inexpensive and are thus by many manufacturers. These are often very inexpensive.

Whole Food or Food-grown:

use raw materials by combining minerals and some pharmaceutically manufactured vitamins with yeast cells. These are the most usable and available nutrients to the body. They are also the most expensive.

Tablets: contain fillers, binders, lubricants, and coatings. Fillers make the tablet large enough to take comfortably when the nutrient is a very small amount. Binders hold ingredients together. Lubricants coat the ingredients so they do not stick to the machines and are easier to swallow. These added ingredients can hinder absorption in anyone who lacks stomach acid, experiences digestive problems or suffers from poor assimilation of nutrients.

Time-released: contain substances that reduce absorption even further, because they release nutrients over an extended period. Since most nutrients are absorbed quickly in the small intestine, time-released tablets and capsules are the least absorbed. Those with weak digestive systems have a hard time breaking them down.

Sublingual: bypass the digestive tract and are absorbed under the tongue. Vitamin B12 is an example.

Chewables: contain natural or artificial sweeteners, flavoring and coloring to improve their taste and appearance along with the binders, fillers and coatings. (Be sure to brush your teeth after taking chewable supplements to avoid tooth decay.)

Capsules: contain fillers. Capsules dissolve quickly and are easy to digest.

Powders and Liquids:

Powders and liquids are easily absorbed. Check labels for added sweetening, flavoring and coloring.

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Are you taking a synthetic vitamin? Take the test!

Print off the label and read the list of ingredients.

Look for ingredients such as *ascorbic acid, natural or artificial organic flavoring, sucralose, or yellow 6*. These are all synthetic nutrients. Another item to look for is ingredients that start with *dl instead of d, like dl-alpha tocopheryl* (Vitamin E). Lastly, *pyridoxine hydrochloride, thiamin mononitrate, or cholecalciferol* are all ingredients in synthetic multivitamins.

Check the Label (some nutrients absorb better than others)

Calcium gluconate is not equivalent to calcium citrate, just as natural source vitamin E is not the same as its synthetic counterpart. A large difference in price can sometimes be a clue to a poor quality item as well.

- Calcium citrate is best absorbed, calcium carbonate is the second best.
- Selenium is best absorbed in the chelated or L-selenomethionine form

It is important to check the “elemental” or true amount of a mineral. In many cases, the amount listed on the label is the mineral plus its carrier substance. For instance, magnesium aspartate contains about four-fifths aspartate and only about one-fifth magnesium. However, if the magnesium aspartate is in brackets—magnesium (aspartate)—or if an elemental amount of magnesium is specified separately—then you know exactly how much magnesium is in each tablet. In some cases, a supplement will contain large amounts of nutrient and minimal carrier substance, and sometimes there is little nutrient and more carrier substance.

If there is more than one nutrient, be sure that each item is listed separately according to its strength. Otherwise, you cannot be sure of exactly what you are getting.

The Real Problem with Synthetic Vitamins

Wasting \$\$. In synthetic vitamins, only 50-70 percent contains natural nutrients. Our bodies usually do not absorb more than 50 percent of vitamins or minerals we take, it is just the way our digestive system works. So if your vitamin is synthetic, your body is only absorbing 25 percent of what is being advertised on the bottle. The rest is literally being flushed down the toilet in your urine.

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Some Vitamins/Minerals Work Better in Pairs

Iron is better absorbed with vitamin C and apart from vitamin E because they enhance each other.

Vitamin C and bioflavonoids elemental amount of are recommended together.

Calcium cannot be absorbed without vitamin D and in balance with magnesium.

Taking **Zinc** supplements regularly can deplete copper in the body, so small amounts of copper are often recommended with zinc.

Folic acid should be combined with vitamin B12.

Cooper is properly absorbed with iron.

Vitamin D (Cholecalciferol) stimulates the absorption of calcium (you can't absorb calcium without vitamin D)

Vitamin K allows calcium to be deposited into your bones.

Vitamin B6 is linked to maintaining adequate levels of magnesium.

What about Toxicity?

Vitamin A is to be used with caution during pregnancy as amounts over 5,000iu are believed to cause birth defects. However, beta-carotene and mixed carotenoids as your vitamin A source instead is safe for the body and the body will convert beta-carotene and mixed carotenoids into vitamin A when needed.

Iron there is growing concern about iron supplementation and its connection with oxidative stress. Most Americans get plenty of iron via their food. It is recommended to get your iron levels checked prior to supplementation. NOTE: nutrients work in synergy (work together) so when the presence of other nutrients are in the body you will be more able to absorb iron from food sources. In addition, you can't lose iron unless you are bleeding.

Resources & Further Reading: (Decide for yourself which supplements are right.)

Bionutrition by Dr. Ray Strand

What Your Doctor Doesn't Know About Nutritional Medicine by Dr. Ray Strand

Healthy for Life by Dr. Ray Strand

The Biblical Health Institute

The Great Physician's RX by Jordan Rubin

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