

Enough is Enough! Don't Buy Supplements Mindlessly



Who doesn't want to be healthy? If they enhance your health, why not take a wide variety of supplements daily, just in case? But wait! Do we know what we are taking? Supplement manufacturers don't need approval of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) before selling them. The industry has repeatedly and successfully blocked efforts to increase oversight. We need to be cautious in supplement selection to assure quality, purity, freshness, price. Most importantly, we must assure the supplements we purchase will enhance, not hurt our health.

Truth or Myth? Click on links for answers.

People can trust the supplements on the shelf.

Shopping for supplements can be overwhelming, intimidating and confusing. Sure, you can pop a [multivitamin](#) and call it a day, but wouldn't it be great to navigate that pharmaceutical section confidently, buying exactly what we need to meet our goals?

You can't "overdose" fat or water soluble vitamins, as long as you follow label directions on the supplement bottle. The human body is mainly water. Water constantly filters and flushes through our kidneys to maintain chemical balance. Therefore, water soluble vitamins need regular replacement in the body. Excess intake of [water](#) or [fat](#) soluble vitamins can be dangerous. Fat soluble vitamins are stored in the liver and fatty tissues and are eliminated more slowly than water-soluble vitamins.

Folate is a water-soluble B vitamin that occurs naturally in food. [Folic acid](#) is the [synthetic](#) form of folate that is found in [supplements](#) and added to [fortified](#) foods. The correct amount of folic acid is needed to prevent some birth defects. And folic acid may help lower the risk of some cancers, but too much of this synthetic vitamin may actually help fuel some cancer tumors.

There is strong research supporting prolonged vitamin A excess and the increased bone fractures. Vitamin A, in the form of retinol, increases the activity of cells that break down bone and interferes with cells that rebuild bone. We cannot be "overdosed" with vitamin A from plant foods, like carrots, yams, butter nut squash, sweet potatoes, cantaloupe and spinach, because it is in a different form than the variety used in vitamin supplements.

Does extra vitamin C ward off a cold? Have you heard about [the risk of kidney stones](#) with excess vitamin C and calcium supplements?

How about taking extra B vitamins to improve your [energy and concentration](#)?

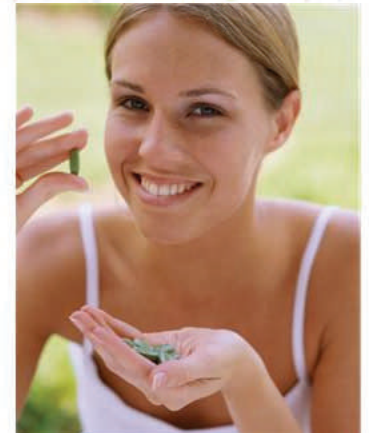
Will taking chromium help us lose weight?

Women's multivitamins are different than those needed by men. Why? Have you heard about the risk of [excess iron](#), if you take more than you really need? How about the need to take [zinc](#) with iron for maximum benefits?

People are taking extra selenium to "boost their thyroid" But guess what? Our bodies only need about 55-90 mcg/day. But when people take as little as 200 mcg of selenium per day for more than 7 years, there is a significantly higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes!

If you drink milk, can you get enough vitamin D? Although a pint of milk contains "25% of the DV of [vitamin D](#)," it may not be enough to bring an individual's vitamin D blood level to a level of "adequacy". The [DRI](#) of vitamin D is enough to prevent rickets in most people. But depending on the distance you live away from the equator, you may need more than the DRI. Get your blood levels checked to determine your body's vitamin D status

Remember Goldilocks and the three bears? There is a "just right" level for every individual.



Eat Smart Program-Missoula City-County Health Department
 Questions or comments? Contact Rebecca Morley, MA
 (406)258-3827 www.co.missoula.mt.us/HealthServices/EatSmart
 To Opt-out of Subscription: [Click Here](#)

