



# Vitamins:

## A vital part of your well-being

Vitamins play an important role in wellness. These nutrients help our bodies grow and develop normally. Look below for a glance at the vitamins your body needs, as well as some good sources.

**Vitamin A** is an important factor in growth throughout life. Vitamin A is involved in the development and maintenance of epithelial tissues (mucus membranes, the lining of organs such as stomach, lungs, bladder and skin). Vitamin A also helps the growth of bones and teeth.

**Where to get it:** You can get vitamin A from eggs, liver, carrots, spinach, pumpkin and cantaloupe.

**Vitamin C** plays many roles in the chemistry of the human body. It is essential for the production of collagen, an important element of the body's connective tissue. It is also necessary for the production of hemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying pigment inside red blood cells, and it helps increase the absorption of iron from the

intestines. Vitamin C is also a potent antioxidant. Antioxidants may play a role in slowing the aging process, reducing damage to the lining of blood vessels and possibly reducing the occurrences of some types of cancer.

You can get vitamin C from citrus fruits, bell peppers, green beans, strawberries, papaya, potatoes, broccoli and tomatoes.

**Vitamin D** is very important in forming and keeping strong bones. It also plays a key role in controlling cell growth and appears critical to a healthy immune system.

**Where to get it:** Get vitamin D from milk, fatty fish and sunshine.

**Vitamin E**, an antioxidant, helps protect your cells from damage. Lack of vitamin E can cause serious nerve damage or anemia.

**Where to get it:** Good sources of vitamin E include vegetable oils, eggs, liver, wheat germ, almonds and walnuts.

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**The vitamin B family includes the following:**

- **Thiamine** helps produce energy. It also helps with proper nerve function.
- **Riboflavin** helps produce energy.
- **Niacin** helps produce energy. It also is important for skin health, your digestive tract and the nervous system.
- **Vitamin B6** helps your body make red blood cells. It helps with your immunity and the functions of your nervous system.
- **Folate (folic acid)** is needed for all cell functions. It may protect against heart disease. It may lower the risk for birth defects in pregnant women.
- **Vitamin B12** is important for nerve functions. It helps make red blood cells and metabolizes proteins and fats.

You can get B vitamins from proteins like fish, poultry meat, eggs and dairy products. Leafy green vegetables, beans and peas are also good sources.

**Vitamin K** is best known for helping blood clot, and it is a newly discovered champion of bone health. Several studies have found that people with low levels had thinner bones and a higher risk for osteoporosis and bone fractures.

**Where to get it:** Get vitamin K by trying foods like broccoli, Swiss chard, kale or spinach.

You can take too much of some vitamins. This may cause health problems, such as liver damage. Talk to your health care provider if you have questions or concerns.