



Nutrition for Older Adults: Vitamin and Mineral Supplements

October 2019

EXTENSION

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Nutrition and Older Adults

Many older adults can get the nutrients they need by eating a variety of foods following the USDA MyPlate Plan.

The more variety, the less likely one is to get too much or too little of a nutrient.

Some Older Adults May Benefit From a Vitamin and Mineral Supplement

While older adults can get the nutrients they need eating a diet following the USDA MyPlate Plan many do not do so.

Many factors can cause older adults to eat less or have a poor diet:

- Decreased appetite.
- Changes in vision, taste and smell.
- Decreased strength and energy.
- Chewing and swallowing problems.
- Digestive problems.
- Decreased absorption.
- Use of some medicines.

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- Social and emotional changes.
- Limited finances.

Older adults with these issues may benefit from a vitamin and mineral supplement.

Choosing a Supplement

Look for the USP code to assure strength and purity.

Choose a supplement with a variety of vitamins and minerals.

Do not take single vitamins or minerals unless advised by a doctor. One exception is calcium.

Choose a supplement with no more than 100 percent of recommended amounts.

Do not take vitamins or minerals in large amounts unless advised by a doctor.

You Can Get Too Much

One may think more of a vitamin or mineral is better. However, vitamins or minerals taken in large amounts can be harmful.

Too much or too little of a nutrient can affect how the body uses other nutrients.

It is easier to get too much of a vitamin or mineral from a supplement than from food.

You Have To Judge

Not all claims on supplements are FDA approved.

Drugs are tested for safety before they can be sold.

Supplements are not tested for safety before they are allowed to be sold.

Supplements

Do Not Replace Diet

Supplements do not make up for a poor diet.

Supplements do not have all the nutrients important for health.

Keys to good nutrition are variety and moderation.

Eating a diet following the USDA MyPlate Plan is the best way to get the right foods in the right amounts for good health.

Sources

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director of Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. This publication is printed and issued by Oklahoma State University as authorized by the Vice President for Agricultural Programs and has been prepared and distributed at a cost of 20 cents per copy. Revised 1019 GH.