

The World of A.S.P.



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VITAMINS, MINERALS AND FOOD SUPPLEMENTS

by Evan S. Baltazzi

Over 2,600 years ago the Father of Medicine, the great Greek physician Hippocrates was teaching his disciples on the island of Cos that food is the best medicine. This fact was "rediscovered" and confirmed by modern medicine. Ideally, anyone who eats well-balanced meals of wholesome fresh food should not need to fortify it with vitamins, minerals and other supplements. The truth is that precious few people in our country eat well-balanced meals of wholesome, naturally ripened fruits and vegetables and animal proteins free of hormones and other additives. There is also evidence that some supplements taken in excess of the recommended daily allowances (RDA) by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have beneficial effects.

For instance, vitamins C, A, and E which are anti-

oxidants, are reputed to prevent certain cancers. They do not, however, have any curative action once the cancerous mutation has taken place.

Because the health and drug industry is very big business supported by powerful lobbies and because the legal and insurance industries derive also huge profits from malpractice suits and the "protection" against them, this entire field has been the subject of concerted disinformation aimed at maximizing profits rather than informing the public.

There have been attempts by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) backed by the powerful pharmaceutical industry lobby, to bring food supplements under its control, so that they can be obtained only by prescription. Public outcry has successfully opposed this measure, which would have required expensive and very lengthy tests to confirm or

deny any beneficial effects of food supplements.

Every human being wants to live a long and healthy life. Because of the spiralling costs of health care, people are increasingly looking at food supplements for staying in good health. Exercise is also a beneficial factor for managing strain and for improving and maintaining health, yet only a minority turns to meaningful exercise for its health benefits. It is so much easier to pop up one or more pills.

In this climate, a huge and growing business of food supplements took hold. Pamphlets that supposedly divulge "secrets" doctors never tell are multiplying by leaps and bounds, and many compounds and extracts are marketed as food supplements. To ward off any problems with the FDA, these are labeled with the notice that they have not been approved by that organism and make no claims of preventing, diagnosing, or curing any illness. Yet, there

are many publications, which circulate in growing profusion that claim all kinds of benefits for this and that supplement. Some of these claims are justified, while others are pure sales talks. So "caveat emptor," let the buyer beware. When the profit motive enters the picture, truth becomes distorted into "information" commercials. If one were to believe them he would spend his days taking large numbers of all sorts of pills. At considerable cost and, perhaps, to the detriment to his health rather than his benefit.

Since ASP is concerned with holistic self-protection, I thought that some simple, even simplistic, explanations of the function of the main vitamins, minerals, and certain highly publicized supplements, might help our members decide what is good for them. I must also add that there is no definitive knowledge in many areas and optimal dosages have by no means been finalized. Because medicine is still an art and nutrition knowledge is incomplete, one has to decide for himself by trial what is beneficial to his general well-being. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating" happens to be literally true here.

There are two general classes of vitamins: water-soluble and oil-soluble. The latter, like vitamin A can be

overdosed and be cumulatively toxic. Any excess of water soluble vitamins is usually eliminated in the urine.

Because of the small amounts of vitamins contained in formulations and because they are usually administered in the form of some derivative, besides the actual amount in a dose given in milligrams, vitamin labels give also their potency in terms of i. u.'s or international units. The percent of the RDA in a formulation is also given. When the latter is unknown, as it is in many cases, it is so stated on the label.

There is on the market a bewildering array of vitamin, mineral and sundry "food supplements" preparations, each one claiming specific benefits. The consumer gets completely lost trying to determine which one to buy from this plethora of products, prompted mainly by marketing considerations rather than special benefits to the buyer.

Because of the possible overdose of the oil-soluble vitamin A, its water soluble precursor, beta carotene, is often used in its place and mislabelled as vitamin A. Beta carotene is a powerful antioxidant, which benefits the eyes and the skin. Yet there is some recent evidence that in high dosages it might be carcinogenic.

The 100% RDA of beta

carotene (assuming that all of it is turned into vitamin A by the organism) is 5,000 i.u., so it is for the vitamin A proper, usually formulated as retinyl palmitate.

In my own experience and the experience of all those who have followed my recommendation, cod liver oil gelcaps (vitamins A, D and fish oils) are excellent for preventing colds. Three gelcaps of a certain formulation sold by a well-known drugstore chain, provide only 75% of the RDA for vitamin A and there is little worry about overdosing. Even one gelcap a day taken along with a good multivitamin is effective in preventing colds. We have experienced this in our family, and friends who have tried it found it to be so. I do not know the reason but it works, at least for us.

Vitamin B1, as thiamine mononitrate, is helpful for good circulation and for quenching toxic free radicals.

Vitamin B2, or riboflavin, helps the eyes and supports healthy cell growth.

Vitamin B6, as pyridoxin hydrochloride, helps the immune system and the brain functions.

Vitamin B12, cyanocobalamin, is important for energy production and its deficiency is common for vegetarians and seniors.

Vitamin C, ascorbic

acid, is a powerful antioxidant which destroys free radicals and helps good circulation.

Vitamin D3, cholecalciferol, is essential for calcium absorption and healthy bones.

Vitamin E, as d-alpha tocopheryl succinate, is a powerful antioxidant and free radical scavenger. Only the d-variety is beneficial. Avoid cheaper formulations containing the dl-variety.

Biotin for healthy skin, hair, and metabolism.

Choline, as choline bitartrate, for the liver, nervous system and brain functions.

Folic acid is useful for the production of an essential sulphur-containing amino-acid, homocysteine.

Inositol, for healthy arteries and healthy cholesterol metabolism.

Niacin supports healthy nervous system and cholesterol levels.

Niacinamide for a healthy nervous system.

Pantothenic acid, as calcium pantothenate, is useful for the production of adrenal hormones and prevents the worsening of arthritis.

A good vitamin formula must also contain several minerals:

Calcium for the support of muscle, nerves, healthy blood pressure and bone mass.

Chromium for good metabolism and healthy blood

sugar levels.

Copper for energy production and healthy nerves.

Iodine in table salt or preferably in kelp, for the thyroid gland and fat metabolism.

Magnesium for the heart and lungs and calcium assimilation.

Manganese for the metabolism and nerve function. Diabetics often show deficiency in this metal.

Molybdenum for good metabolism and proper cell function. In cases of severe deficiency it can cause impotence.

Potassium for healthy nervous and cardiovascular systems.

Selenium for a healthy heart in conjunction with vitamin E. Helps the immune system.

Silica, for healthy bones and connective tissue.

Zinc for a healthy prostate and immune system function.

There are many so-called "food supplements" being marketed today. Some are truly valuable, while others are of doubtful value. Here I am going to mention only a few of proven usefulness.

Bioflavonoids for better absorption of vitamin C and blood vessel health.

Coenzyme Q10 for a healthy heart. People at high risk for heart disease or

suffering from either cardiomyopathy or congestive heart failure find it useful.

Ginseng is an adaptogen for adaptation to a variety of strain caused by external stresses, such as variations of temperature and light patterns. It has been used for its beneficial effects over thousands of years.

There are two types of ginseng, the Chinese and Korean type and the Siberian type, its close relative. Both work and modern research in Europe and Russia has confirmed their usefulness without truly understanding how they function. Apparently ginseng improves oxygen utilization by the organism.

Melatonin is a hormone that regulates our circadian rhythm. As we age its production in our body diminishes and by supplementing it we can improve our sleep. It is far better than sleeping pills.

You are the World's foremost expert on yourself. Do not accept any claims at face value. Try supplements per directions, if you will, and decide for yourself if they are doing you any good. Always look on the bottles for expiration date and batch number. There is evidence that a chemical process known as "chelation" makes minerals more assimilable.

Look for at least 100%

RDA's. More is often useful. Again, you are the judge.

I have pointed out in earlier issues that medical statistics and their interpretation(s) are of questionable value because of the inherent difficulty for choosing a truly representative sample of the US population, and even more so, for the population of the World. Yet since nothing better is available conclusions must be used cautiously.

Cases to the point, the recent flip-flop about eggs and cholesterol, and the even more recent findings about low fat, high carbohydrate diets.

I have already explained why I did not believe eggs were as bad as the medical profession thought at the time.

When the organism is deprived of fat, it starts making its own under conditions dangerously close to generating heart disease. An acquaintance of mine, a strict vegetarian who carefully avoids fat, who ran five miles a day, his cholesterol around 130, had two successive heart attacks. On the contrary, a lady in her eighties I know, with cholesterol in the range of 600, never had any heart or circulatory problems.

Of course all this is explained away and rationalized with more statistics thrown in.

In short, you better take your health into your own

hands and be actively involved in any and all decisions concerning it. Do ask a lot of questions and take no one's word as Gospel truth.

You will notice that an increasing number of doctors are jumping now into the alternative medicine bandwagon.

TECHNICAL CORNER.
THE LIFT PUNCH THROW.

This very effective and graceful throw can be performed against any reaching attack by taking the attacker's (A) motion, accelerating it and turning it against him. It is part of the Black Belt III, A.S.P., program.

Let's assume that A takes you by the right lapel with the left hand and throws a direct or an angle punch at you with the right.

You have two options:

(1) Deflect his attack by raising your left bent elbow half-turning your upper body toward your rear right, wrapping up and around his attacking arm with the left and applying a W-2.

(2) Apply the Lift Punch Throw as follows:

No matter how strong is his grip on your lapel, A cannot prevent you from pivoting toward your rear left, to the outside of his grip. Do not stop his attacking arm but come from under to pull it

down and around with your right hand toward your own right. Jump with your left foot to A's right side and lead his attacking arm into a wide rightward circle as you gently push down on his nape.

Use his opposition to your motion to lift his chin up with your right upper arm, then down, to throw him on his back. Lifting high your right leg bent at the knee to stomp with the right foot, gives extra power to your throw. If your physique allows, place your left arm behind A's neck and with your left hand under A's nose tilt and twist his head backward toward your left to make your throw even more effective. *The motion of your right arm should be first up to break A's balance, then down to throw him. Do not cut your lead short and blend your motions with A's reactions.*

This throw requires a directional change and fast footwork and for this reason it is part of the Black Belt III, A.S.P. program. In our system only a few throws and combinations are studied. These are selected because their basic motions are part of many other easily derived throws. We do not believe in bulk but in meaningful quality.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR TO
 ALL**

FROM THE BALTAZZIS