

Things You Should Know About Nutritional Supplements

Making sure that you get the right vitamins and minerals for your body is a vital part of maintaining good health. Nutritional supplements can be a great way to get the nutrients you need, but it can be difficult to know which ones are right for you.

Before taking any supplement, it's important to know the basics of what they are, how they work, and what potential risks they may pose. For example, if you are taking any weight loss supplements without any research then it may increase risks for many health issues like kidney problems, liver damage, etc. Here are 10 things you should know about nutritional supplements before taking them. Knowing these facts can help you make an informed decision about whether or not taking a supplement is right for you.

Definition of a nutritional supplement

A nutritional supplement is any type of food or drink that contains one or more vitamins, minerals, herbs, amino acids, or other ingredients that have health benefits when ingested. Nutritional supplements are used to increase the intake of vitamins, minerals, fats, amino acids, antioxidants, and other nutrients in the diet that may be lacking.

For example, vitamin C is found in oranges, but some people cannot get enough vitamin C through their diet. Vitamin C is important for immunity and preventing diseases like the consumption of vitamin C can lower the risk of [type 2 diabetes](#), so a healthy person may choose to take a vitamin C supplement to make sure they get enough. There are many kinds of nutritional supplements available.

Some are intended to treat a specific nutritional deficiency, while others are meant to promote overall health and well-being through the increased nutrient intake. Common types of nutritional supplements include multivitamins, minerals, herbs, amino acids, probiotics, and vitamins. Dietary supplements may also be found in certain types of foods, such as fortified dairy products.

Understanding the purpose of nutritional supplements

One way to get nutrients is by consuming foods high in vitamins and minerals. These foods can come from animal sources (like meat, fish, eggs, and dairy) or vegetable sources (like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains). Another way to get vitamins and minerals is by taking nutritional supplements. There are many reasons why someone might choose to take nutritional supplements.

One reason that many people take nutritional supplements is to correct a known deficiency. For example, someone may take a vitamin B12 supplement if they don't eat enough meat, eggs, or dairy products. Another reason to take nutritional supplements is to promote overall health

and well-being. For example, someone may take a daily multivitamin even though they don't have a specific deficiency.

Benefits of taking nutritional supplements

- Preventing chronic diseases - Certain diseases are linked to a deficiency in certain vitamins and minerals. Taking nutritional supplements can help reduce the risk of developing these conditions. Examples of nutritional supplements that can help prevent chronic diseases include iron supplements to prevent anemia, folic acid to prevent neural tube defects, zinc to treat and prevent recurrent infections, and vitamin B12 to prevent pernicious anemia.
- Promoting healthy weight - Some nutritional supplements can help with weight management. For example, certain fish oil supplements may promote weight loss by reducing cravings and improving metabolism. Other supplements can help reduce weight gain. Examples include calcium, potassium, and magnesium supplements.
- Preventing (or treating) stress - Certain nutritional supplements can reduce the negative effects of daily stress. Examples include certain B vitamins and omega-3 fatty acids.
- Reducing the risk of depression - Several nutritional supplements may help reduce the risk of depression. These include certain B vitamins, omega-3 fatty acids, and folic acid.
- Preventing heart disease and certain cancers - Several nutritional supplements may help decrease the risk of heart disease and certain cancers. Examples include calcium, folic acid, and vitamins B6 and E.

Potential side effects of taking nutritional supplements

There are a number of potential side effects associated with taking nutritional supplements. Some of these are linked to the specific nutrient, while others are linked to the supplement type.

- Risk of excessive intake - If a supplement is taken in excess, it could lead to negative health effects. Nutritional supplements need to be closely monitored since many provide more than the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) of each nutrient. For example, several B vitamins are needed in smaller amounts. Too many B vitamins can lead to an imbalance in the nervous system.
- Risk of deficiency - If a person takes a specific supplement in large amounts, they may risk creating a deficiency in another nutrient. For example, taking a large amount of vitamin C could lead to a deficiency in the mineral manganese. Some supplements can also reduce the absorption of certain minerals from the digestive system.
- Risk of side effects - Some supplements may cause side effects if taken in large amounts. For example, liver damage can occur if vitamin A is taken in excess.
- Risk of drug interactions - Certain nutritional supplements can interact with certain drugs. These interactions may increase the risk of negative health effects. Examples of supplements that can cause drug interactions include certain B vitamins, iron, and calcium.

How to tell if a nutritional supplement is safe and effective

Before taking a nutritional supplement, you should determine if it is safe and effective for you. Here are some tips to help you make this decision:

- Check the facts - Check the facts before taking a supplement to make sure there is sound science behind it. There should be research that supports the benefits of the supplement and that it is safe for healthy, non-pregnant adults.
- Ask your doctor - If you have a specific health concern, you should talk to your doctor before taking a nutritional supplement. Your doctor can help you determine if there is a deficiency in your diet and if taking a supplement is right for you.
- Consider the types of supplements - There are a number of different types of nutritional supplements. Some are safer and more effective than others. Tablets and pills can cause side effects in certain people. They may be better for short-term use, while some liquid or chewable supplements can be used long-term.

How to read labels on nutritional supplements

When you are shopping for a supplement, you may want to look for certain qualities on the label. Different label features can indicate the quality of a supplement and help you make an informed decision about which product to buy.

- Check the expiration date - Be sure to check the expiration date of the supplement. Expired supplements may not be as effective, and they could have lower-quality ingredients.
- Look for seals of approval - There are several seals of approval on dietary supplements. These include the USP Verified Dietary Supplement seal, NSF International's Dietary Supplement Seal, and the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Service (DSHS) seal.
- Look for the ingredients - Some supplements include the ingredients on the label. Others include a "Supplement Facts" label that lists the ingredients.

Nutritional supplement interactions

Certain nutritional supplements can potentially interact with certain drugs, certain medical conditions, or certain dietary restrictions. For example, certain B vitamins can interact with niacin, statins, and diabetes medications. Iron supplements can interact with antibiotics and certain other drugs. Potassium supplements can interact with certain blood pressure medications.

- Vitamin C and niacin - High doses of vitamin C can interact with niacin. Niacin is often used to lower cholesterol and blood pressure. An interaction between these two can cause too much niacin to be released into the blood.

- Folic acid and blood thinners - Folic acid is often used to prevent birth defects in pregnant women. This supplement can also lower the risk of blood clotting in people with high cholesterol or who take certain blood thinners.
- Iron and calcium - Calcium can interact with certain iron supplements and cause the body to absorb less iron. This can be a problem for people with an iron deficiency.

How to find the right nutritional supplement for you

If you decide to take a supplement for health reasons, it's important that you choose the right one for you. Some questions to ask yourself include:

- What health issues do you have? - If you have a specific health concern, you may want to try taking a supplement that can help address that issue. If you have a general health concern, a general multivitamin may be a good option.
- What are your dietary restrictions? - Certain dietary restrictions can make it difficult to get the nutrients you need. If you have certain dietary restrictions, you might want to take a supplement that can help you get enough of the nutrients you need.
- What is your budget? - Nutritional supplements can vary in price and may have different price points based on quality. Some supplements are more expensive because they provide more nutrients, or they come in a larger dose.

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