

# Nutritional News



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## Nutrition Basics Part II

Micronutrients, essential for proper functioning of every system in the body are broken down into 2 classes; vitamins and minerals. Our body cannot make all of the micro-nutrients so they must be supplied through the diet. A variety of whole foods is important to ensure you are getting what you need.

### Vitamins

**Vitamin A** is important for healthy eyesight and gums. The 11 members of what is known as **B-complex** are critical nutrients for all things mind-related: mood, memory, even migraines can benefit from the B's. In the right amounts, the B's can quell anxiety, lift depression, ease PMS, and boost your energy. They are a chemically related family of nutrients that work as a team. Some B vitamins help cells burn fats and glucose for energy while others help make neurotransmitters like serotonin. Some even assist with the production and repair of DNA. **Vitamin C** boosts the immune system and helps protect cells from damage by free radicals. **Vitamin D** helps the body absorb calcium, which is needed for strong bones as well as the immune function. **Vitamin E** acts as an antioxidant, helping to protect cells from the damage caused by free radicals (free radicals are compounds formed when our bodies convert the food we eat into energy). In addition to supporting the normal clotting of blood, **Vitamin K** also helps support bone density, and plays an especially pivotal role for women nearing menopause who are at risk for osteoporosis.

### Minerals

Minerals are further broken down into two groups: macrominerals, which means "large" where your body needs greater amounts and trace minerals where your body only requires a small amount. Mineral deficiencies can negatively impact the body. It's important that you're getting your micronutrients in the right dosages. Doses vary depending on your sex age and special needs. The minerals needed to keep your body functioning

far outnumber the vitamins. There are recommended intakes set for 17 of the 60 minerals known. Researchers are still working on declaring more that are essential to good health.

**Calcium** works with vitamin D in order to keep bones and teeth strong.

**Chromium** helps to regulate hunger and glucose levels, protects DNA and controls your blood's fat and cholesterol levels. **Copper** works with iron to keep bones, blood vessels and nerves functioning properly. It also helps form hemoglobin in your blood.

**Fluoride** occurs naturally in the body. It maintains bone structure and is found in bones and teeth. Needed in only small quantities, **iodine** helps your thyroid function properly. It delivers energy to the body and helps you feel energized. **Iron** is needed for red blood cell production. **Manganese** is an essential nutrient involved in many chemical processes in the body, including processing of cholesterol, carbohydrates and protein while **magnesium** supports nervous system health. The main known function of **molybdenum** in humans is to act as a catalyst for enzymes and to help facilitate the breakdown of certain amino acids in the body. **Phosphorus** promotes healthy metabolism, the utilization of many B-complex vitamins, proper muscle and nerve function and calcium balance. **Potassium** is essential for the heart, kidneys, muscles, nerves and digestion. It is also required for regulating fluid balance, the body's acid-base balance and blood pressure.

**Selenium** acts as an antioxidant to protect the body from chronic diseases and premature aging.

**Sodium** regulates water balance, controlling muscle and nerve function.

**Zinc** is required for healthy skin, reproductive and immune function. It helps heal wounds and fights off infections.

**Resources:**  
healthycanadians.gc.ca  
Dr. Weil, MD

## Fun Food Facts!



Hungarian biochemist, Dr. Albert Szent-Gyorgyi first isolated vitamin C in 1928.

He isolated the vitamin from the adrenals of animals as part of ongoing research on the chemistry of cell respiration.

## Did You Know?



Vitamin D is one of few vitamins produced by your body.

Your body could produce up to 10,000 units in a 20 minute period on a sunny day

You cannot get the benefits of vitamin D from sunlight when sitting inside a sunny room or in a car; the sunlight must be direct.

The further you live from the equator, the more sun you will need.

A human would have to drink approximately 10 tall glasses of milk each day to get the daily recommendation of Vitamin D.

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