

- Nutrition

Nutrients missing from an average person's diet

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ACCORDING to the World Health Organisation, eating a range of whole (that is, unprocessed) and fresh foods daily aids in ensuring that both children and adults alike receive the proper amounts of crucial nutrients.



Barbecue experts FoodFireFriends collaborated with nutritionists Ellie Busby and Dr Sarah Cooke to find out what nutrients are missing the most from the average person's diet.

Zinc

Nutritionist Ellie Busby says that most people do not get enough zinc, due to our food being over-processed, which strips the goodness out, and zinc suffers the most.

“If your hair is thinning or dry, you might need more zinc. Other signs of a zinc deficiency are soft nails, dry skin, and getting ill a lot.

“Foods that are rich in zinc to integrate in everyday diets are wholewheat bread and pasta, whole grains (quinoa, buckwheat, brown rice) and pumpkin seeds.”

Vitamin B6

She also mentions that skin rashes, sore lips and tongue, mood changes and tiredness can all be signs of Vitamin B6 deficiency. Vitamin B6 is important to protect and strengthen the immune system and maintain an optimal amount of amino acids in the blood.

Dr Sarah Cooke explains that vitamin B6 is one of the most common micronutrient deficiencies in the average person's diet. Optimal sources of vitamin B6 include avocado, russet potatoes, garbanzo beans, yellowfin tuna and nuts.

Vitamin D

“Our diets do not provide enough vitamin D. In actuality, sunshine is the main source of most of it. We need to spend more time outside in the sun. So, to obtain what it needs, our body looks to our diet,” argues Busby. Oily fish is the sole natural food source of vitamin D, she says.

Omega-3

The majority of the fat that makes up our brains is Omega3. The brain will age more quickly if you don't receive enough Omega-3 fatty acids, which will raise your chances of dementia as you age. The necessity for a balance between Omega-3 and Omega-6 is something that most people are unaware of. Therefore, we cannot simply consume Omega-3-rich foods and hope for the best. We also need to lower our Omega-6

Most people consume an excessive amount of processed foods and too little nuts and seeds, Dr Cooke adds. Sources of Omega-3 include oily fish such as salmon, walnuts and flax seed.

“By adding flaxseed to oatmeal or walnuts to salad we help increase our daily Omega-3 intake.”

Iron

“Iron is found in both animal foods and plant foods. Foods such as red meat, eggs and oysters contain heme iron, which is more easily absorbed than non-heme iron. Plant sources of iron include lentils, spinach, tofu and cashew nuts.

To increase the absorption of iron from plants, it is good to combine these foods with vitamin C, such as lemon juice in a salad dressing, or the addition of strawberries or oranges to a snack, advises Cooke.

Calcium and magnesium

Despite people consuming large quantities of milk and dairy products, 70% of people are lactose-intolerant as an adult, which can lead to gut issues.

For those who are lactose-free, it is crucial

to eat lots of plant foods with calcium, such as fortified plant milks, dark green leafy vegetables, and seeds (especially poppy, sesame, and chia seeds).

Magnesium is one of the most commonly recommended supplements by doctors worldwide, “because getting enough magnesium from our diets is nearly impossible, especially when we are stressed”.

In fact, the body depletes magnesium reserves in order to produce stress hormones.

Magnesium is abundant in whole grains, nuts, dark chocolate, and dark green leafy vegetables. — IOL Health.