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### Sip, chew or swallow?

As a general rule, capsules are better than pills, but vitamin D should be in liquid form as it will absorb faster and is easier to digest.



# Stop wasting money on VITAMINS

*Getting a daily health boost is easier than you think*

**A**re you among the 51%\* of women who feel they're not getting enough vitamins and minerals from their meals? 'Busy lifestyles, eating on the run, ready meals and diets that exclude key food groups all increase the risk of nutrient gaps,' says dietician Dr Carrie Ruxton. Topping up with supplements? Here's how to make your cash go further...

### Read labels

Shop from a reputable retailer to get the best quality. Supplements permitted for use in this country are heavily regulated under UK food law, so avoid buying cut-price products online that may not meet safety regulations. 'Also check the ingredients and the percentage of the nutrient reference value (NRV) of the

vitamins and minerals,' says public health nutritionist Dr Emma Derbyshire. A higher percentage NRV may be more expensive, but it will be better value.

### Dose right

Going over your recommended daily allowance (RDA) isn't a fast track to better health - you could be wasting your money.



The body can't store water-soluble vitamins, such as B vitamins and vitamin C, so taking more than your body needs means it'll be excreted when you wee. Find out how much of each vitamin and mineral you need at nhs.uk.

**21%**  
 of UK adults eat veg daily, and just 19% eat fruit every day\*\* - meaning many of us face an increased likelihood of a nutrient deficiency.

**Create a routine**

Pop your supplements when they're most effective. 'If you're taking a multivitamin or anything with B vitamins, which can be stimulating, take it with breakfast,' says nutritional therapist Corin Sadler. 'Magnesium is better with an evening meal as it's known to help with winding down. Iron is best absorbed away from food, but with a small amount of vitamin C, so have it with a glass of fruit juice half an hour before food.'

**Shop for your life stage**

There's no point chewing on children's gummies just because they taste good, or buying pregnancy vitamins if you're not expecting. 'Rethink your supplements when you experience a change in diet, lifestyle or health symptoms,' says Dr Sarah Brewer.

**Think seasonally**

The body's need for certain nutrients can change - for example, when the weather gets warmer we might be more susceptible to UV damage, dehydration and depleted energy. Consider tweaking what you take with the seasons, allowing time for the benefits of a new routine to kick in. 'If you're taking supplements to correct a deficiency, it's important to test your levels after three months to see any changes,' says nutritionist Helen Ford.

**Cut back on booze**

'Alcohol reduces digestive enzymes, which means the absorption of nutrients is inhibited,' says nutritionist Rob Hobson. Stick to the recommended intake of no more than 14 units of alcohol a week (equal to six 175ml glasses of 13%-strength wine).

**Store safely**

Don't keep supplements in the kitchen or bathroom. This exposes them to damage from dampness and light, meaning that you may have to replace them sooner. A bedside table is a good option as

supplement containers will be in your sight line both morning and night, so you'll have less chance of forgetting about them. Have a regular clear-out of your cupboards for any long-kept bottles, too: vitamins and minerals beyond their shelf life lose potency.

**Daily checklist**

Looking to target a particular concern? Tick the ones relevant to you, then speak to your pharmacist to come up with the best buy. Are you...

- \* MENOPAUSAL   
 Try vitamin D, and herbal remedies such as black cohosh\*\*\*
- \* SUFFERING COLD AFTER COLD   
 Try vitamin D, zinc and vitamin C
- \* ACHY WITH STIFF JOINTS   
 Try omega-3 fish oil and glucosamine
- \* CONSTANTLY TIRED   
 Try iron and vitamin B12
- \* RECOVERING FROM INJURY   
 Try vitamin C and turmeric
- \* STRUGGLING TO NOD OFF   
 Try magnesium
- \* STRESSED   
 Try magnesium and B vitamins

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES; \*\*SCHWABE PHARMA (UK) LTD AND NATURE'S WAY UK SURVEY SPRING 2023; \*\*\*BLACK COHOSH MAY CAUSE ADVERSE SIDE EFFECTS AND COULD BE LINKED TO LIVER DAMAGE LONG-TERM SAFETY IS NOT KNOWN. IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH, SEE YOUR GP. CONSULT YOUR GP OR MEDICAL EXPERT BEFORE TAKING NEW SUPPLEMENTS