

Multivitamins: Now, More Than Ever (cont'd)

How to Read the Labels on Multivitamins

Daily Values have been designed solely for listing nutrients on food labels and for ease of interpretation. Food and supplement labels contain information about the amount of a particular nutrient and its percentage of Daily Values (%DV). The %DVs are based on 1968 (older) guidelines for a 2,000-calorie diet for all healthy adults and children over the age of 4. A limited number of vitamins and minerals are included in the Daily Values.

How to Select a Multivitamin

- Select a supplement that contains a variety of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. For example, CoQ10, a protective antioxidant, and the carotenoids lycopene and lutein are a good addition to a multiple-vitamin; they are safe and offer a number of benefits.
- If the letters *GMP* or *USP* appear on the label, it is a guarantee of a well-made and pure product. Contrary to popular belief, the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) has the right to issue and enforce manufacturing regulations for supplements. In 1997 the FDA proposed just such guidelines for industry Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP). The National Nutritional Foods Association (NNFA) has based its GMP certification program on these requirements. GMP assures you that a supplement is high quality and pure and that the manufacturer meets NNFA's standards for cleanliness, proper handling of raw materials, equipment maintenance, staff training and competence, and everything else that goes into manufacturing an exceptional product.
- Look for an Expiration Date and store vitamins appropriately. Vitamins deteriorate when exposed to air, light, heat, and time. Store supplements in a dry, dark, cool environment and keep the caps tightly sealed.

The Choice Is Yours!

In addition to a healthy diet, sufficient sleep and moderate exercise, the simplest way to protect your health is by taking an evidence-based multivitamin/mineral supplement.

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For more information:

1. U.S. National Institutes of Health
Office of Alternative Medicine
<http://altmed.od.nih.gov/>

2. Food and Nutrition Board's Dietary Reference Intakes (including RDAs, Adequate Intakes, and Tolerable Upper Intake Levels) National Academy Press:
<http://books.nap.edu/books/0309071836html/index.html>

3. Food Label information from the FDA
<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/label.html>

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