

Vitamins and Supplements

No good cancer prevention program can avoid a discussion of the need for vitamins and supplements to enhance a good, nutritious diet. While natural, food-based sources are ideal, they may not be a realistic complete source for a number of reasons. First off, not all foods, vegetables, fruits and plants are available at all times in all places. Second, if they are, they may be prohibitively expensive. Third, in order to reach therapeutic levels, many people would have to consume far larger than normal quantities of the foods that contain the vitamins – that means high expense, too many calories, and, in some cases, intake of unwanted ingredients present in the food.

Cancer is a disease that starts inside individual cells in the body. Each cell contains its own set of DNA material that regulates the processes that take place inside of it. Cancer appears when a mutation forms with the DNA structure. As the cells divide giving rise to more cells, the mutation occurs in each new generation of cells. Cancer cells multiply at an abnormally fast rate. Carcinogens, viral agents, heredity and other factors affecting normal cell division are noted as causes of cancer.

In order to strengthen the body's already existent immune system processes and eliminate toxins, cancer prevention supplements are ingested.

The primary vitamins and supplements that we recommend include:

Vitamin D: Dozens of studies suggest an association between low vitamin D levels and increased many types of prevalent cancers.

Tumeric (curcumin): The multi-targeted mechanisms of curcumin have yielded compelling results in combating a broad array of cancers, including those of the breast, uterus, cervix, prostate and GI tract. A burgeoning body of research demonstrates curcumin's potential to counter cancers of the blood, brain, lung, and bladder as well.

Ginger: Research has shown that ginger appears to offer a two-pronged attack on cancer cells: it makes them commit suicide, known as apoptosis, and self-digest, known as autophagy.

Since vitamin and mineral supplements can cause nausea, heartburn and other gastric disturbances, especially when taken on an empty stomach, we advise taking your supplements with or shortly before a meal for best absorption and least side effects. If you are not pregnant, unless advised by your physician, you probably should not be taking a vitamin / mineral supplement which contains iron. Iron is often the culprit that causes gastrointestinal side effects from the supplement. In fact, the only people who need extra iron are women of reproductive age who have heavy menstrual bleeding and people with iron deficiency anemia. No one else should take extra iron because excess amounts can accumulate in the body and increase the risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease.

Vitamins and minerals are micro-nutrients that serve a specific purpose and benefit the body in a unique way. Is a healthy diet not enough? Because of what happens to food today – processing, storage, transportation long distances – even a well rounded diet is often deficient in essential nutrients for

optimal health. Taking supplements will not totally make up for an unhealthy diet, but they can help. In many Western countries, people tend to consume foods that are high in calories, but lack nutrients that are vital for good health. Some groups of people, because of distinct nutritional needs, benefit most from taking a vitamin and mineral supplement:

- Women of childbearing age (need extra calcium and iron)
- Pregnant or lactating women
- Seniors
- Children and teenagers with irregular eating habits
- Vegetarians or vegans
- Dieters and people avoiding certain food groups
- People with eating disorders or medical conditions (deficiency diseases, absorption problems, lactose intolerance)
- People who often eat processed and fast food
- People who smoke (destroys some essential nutrients like vitamin C)
- People who drink a lot of alcohol (usually do not get adequate caloric intake from essential nutrients)

The word “supplement” means something added. In this case, you are “adding” to a basic diet and lifestyle. When taking any supplement make sure there is good scientific research that supports the claims of the marketers and good medical support for the advice. Be sure the supplement does not interact with any medications you are taking. The safest way to purchase supplements is from a reputable vitamin or health food store or from the internet if the product has strong scientific and medical support.