

What should we know when choosing a multivitamin?

What Is a Multivitamin?

A multivitamin is a supplement that contains a combination of vitamins and minerals, such as vitamins A, B, C, D, E, iron, zinc, and calcium. It is meant to help fill nutritional gaps when the diet does not provide enough nutrients.

Do You Really Need a Multivitamin?

Everyone doesn't need a multivitamin. Most healthy people can get the nutrients they need by eating a balanced diet that includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy products, nuts, and protein-rich foods. However, some groups may benefit from a multivitamin, including:

- Pregnant women or women planning pregnancy
- Older adults, people with poor appetite or restricted diets
- Vegetarians and vegans
- People recovering from illness
- Individuals with certain medical conditions that affect nutrient absorption

It is always a good idea to discuss supplements with a healthcare professional if you have a medical condition or take regular medicines.

How to Choose the Right Multivitamin?

1. Choose According to Your Age & Gender because Nutritional needs vary with Choose age and sex.

- Children need different amounts of vitamins than adults.
- Women of childbearing age may need more iron and folic acid.
- Men usually require less iron.
- Older adults may need more vitamin D, vitamin B12, and calcium.

Look for a product designed for your age group and gender.

2. Read the Label Carefully before buying, check:

- Which vitamins and minerals are included?
- The amount of each nutrient
- Expiry date and Recommended daily dose

A good multivitamin should provide around the recommended daily requirement for most nutrients rather than extremely high amounts.

3. Avoid the “More Is Better” Myth

Always follow the recommended dose. Many people think that taking higher doses of vitamins provides extra benefits. This is not true. Too much of certain vitamins and minerals can be harmful. For example:

- Excess vitamin A may cause liver problems.
- Too much iron can cause stomach upset and other complications.
- Excess vitamin D can lead to high calcium levels.

4. Consider Your Health Needs

Different multivitamins are made for different purposes. Examples include:

- Prenatal multivitamins for pregnancy
- Multivitamins for seniors or for vegetarians
- Products focused on bone health, immunity, or energy support

Select one that matches your personal health needs instead of buying the most expensive product.

5. Look for Quality and Safety

Buy products from reputable companies and trusted pharmacies. Check whether:

- The manufacturer is well known.
- The product has proper labelling.
- It has undergone quality testing if indicated.

Supplements are only useful if they contain the quality ingredients listed on the label.

6. Be Careful If You Take Medicines

Some vitamins and minerals can interact with medicines. For example:

- Vitamin K can interfere with blood-thinning medicines.
- Calcium and iron may affect the absorption of some medicines.

If you take prescription medicines, ask your doctor or pharmacist before starting any supplement.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- ✗ Buying a supplement just because of advertisements.
- ✗ Taking several vitamin products together without checking the ingredients.
- ✗ Assuming multivitamins can replace healthy food.
- ✗ Taking doses higher than recommended.
- ✗ Ignoring medical advice when you have a chronic illness.

Remember: Food Comes First

Multivitamins are called "supplements" because they are meant to supplement, not replace, a healthy diet. Eating a variety of foods remains the best way to obtain nutrients and maintain good health.

Vitamin	Main Benefits	Common Food Sources
Vitamin A	Supports good vision, healthy skin, growth, and immunity.	Carrots, sweet potatoes, spinach, milk, eggs
Vitamin B1 and B3	(Thiamine & Niacin) Helps convert food into energy and supports brain and nerve function.	Whole grains, legumes, nuts And Meat, fish, peanuts, mushrooms
Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin)	Helps cells produce energy and supports healthy skin and eyes.	Milk, eggs, leafy vegetables
Vitamin B6	Supports brain function, immune health, and red blood cell formation.	Bananas, potatoes, fish, chicken
Vitamin B9	(Folate/ Folic Acid) Important for cell growth, blood formation, and healthy pregnancy.	Green leafy vegetables, beans, citrus fruits
Vitamin B12	Helps make red blood cells, supports nerve health, and prevents anaemia.	Meat, fish, eggs, dairy products
Vitamin C	Boosts immunity, helps wound healing, and supports healthy skin and gums.	Oranges, lemons, guava, amla, tomatoes
Vitamin D	Helps absorb calcium, strengthens bones and teeth, and supports immunity.	Sunlight, fatty fish, fortified milk
Vitamin E	Acts as an antioxidant, protecting cells from damage and supporting skin health.	Nuts, seeds, vegetable oils
Vitamin K	Helps blood clot normally and supports bone health.	Green leafy vegetables, broccoli, cabbage

Five Questions to Ask Before Buying

1. Is this multivitamin suitable for my age and gender?
2. Does it provide around 100% of most essential vitamins?
3. Are any nutrients present in excessively high amounts?
4. Does it contain unnecessary additives?
5. Is it from a reputable manufacturer?

Final Message: A multivitamin is not a magic pill. Consider your age, gender, health condition, diet, and product quality. Read labels carefully, avoid unnecessary high doses, and seek professional advice if you are unsure. **The right multivitamin can help fill nutritional gaps, but a balanced diet, regular exercise, proper sleep, and healthy habits remain the foundations of good health.**

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