

## What about nutritional supplements?

### Nutritional supplements are also called

- Dietary supplements
- Alternative medicines
- Herbal products
- Natural products

### Nutritional supplements are available as

- Tablets and capsules
- Teas for brewing
- Canned liquids for drinking
- Powders for mixing with fluids
- Canned liquids for tube feedings

### Facts About Nutritional Supplements

- Nutritional supplements' manufacturing, labeling, and advertising ARE regulated.
- Nutritional supplements are NOT regulated like medicines, because they are regarded as food.
- Nutritional supplements may interact with other medicines and medical conditions.
- Nutritional supplements are available in many forms: tablets, capsules, powders, and liquids.
- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) monitors the safety of nutritional supplements.
- Nutritional supplements may NOT make "health claims", which demonstrate a relationship between a nutrient and a disease.

### Using Nutritional Supplements

- Nutritional supplements should not be a replacement for good nutrition!
- Before starting a nutritional supplement, check with your doctor and pharmacist to make sure it will not interact with your medicines (both prescription and nonprescription) or medical condition.

### The ElderCare Patient Education Series includes:

Aging and Your Response to Medicines  
Alcohol: Friend or Foe?  
Did You Remember to Ask? The Consumer's Quick Reference to Using Medicines  
Eye Medicines: May Be More Than Meets the Eye  
The Caregiver's Guide to Using Medicines  
Medicines and Travel: "All Aboard" With the Older Adult's Medicine Travel Guidelines  
Personal Medicine Record  
Home Safety Issues: Poison Prevention for Older Adults—Accidents They Don't Have to Happen!  
Vitamins Are Not Enough: A Nutritional and Vitamin Guide for Older Adults  
OTCs (Over-the-Counter Medicines): Choosing the Right Nonprescription Medicine  
Questions You May Have About Generic Medicines  
How to Select Your Pharmacy and Pharmacist



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# Vitamins Are Not Enough

## A Nutritional and Vitamin Guide for Older Adults



THE PETER LAMY CENTER  
for Drug Therapy and Aging

## Good nutrition ...

- is the key to good health.
- promotes growth and repair of body cells.
- is a balance of more than 40 different nutrients.
- includes a variety of foods from four different food groups: Meat, Grain, Dairy, and Fruits and Vegetables.

### Follow the Food Guide Pyramid

*The number of servings depends on how many calories you need. To reach and maintain your desired body weight, adjust the size of portions.*

#### • Fats, Oils, Sweets

Use sparingly. Go easy on butter, margarine, gravy, salad dressing, sugar, and desserts.

#### • Milk, Yogurt, Cheese Group

2-3 servings a day. A great source of calcium, but choose low fat or "part skim" when available.

#### • Meat Group

2-3 servings a day. Select meat, poultry (remove skin), fish, dry beans, eggs, and nuts.

#### • Vegetable Group

3-5 servings a day. Eat a variety. Include dark green, leafy vegetables (*cooked or raw*) and legumes.

#### • Fruit Group

2-4 servings a day. Choose fresh fruits, fruit juices, and dried fruits. Avoid canned fruit in heavy syrups.

#### • Bread Group

6-11 servings a day. Select bread, cereal, rice, and pasta.



## Special Concerns

### Calories

You need fewer as you get older. Good nutrition in older age means fewer calories.

### Saturated Fats

Are not good for you. Eat only small amounts, including hydrogenated vegetable oils, coconut, and palm kernel oils. (Hint: These are solid at room temperature.)

### Unsaturated Fats

Are good for you, and include most vegetable oils. (Hint: Liquid at room temperature.) Use mainly these fats.

### Low-Salt Diet

Usually means less than 2 grams per day. Caution: Salt does not taste as "salty" later in life. Many medicines and canned foods contain a lot of salt (sodium). Read the label.

### Fluids

As people get older, they often drink less. But the need for fluids does not decrease. Try to drink at least 6-8 glasses of milk, fruit juice, or water a day. Among other things, this helps to prevent constipation.

### Fiber

Yes, you do need it. Fiber is not actually a nutritional agent, but by eating whole grain products and plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, you can avoid intestinal problems. Some fibers may help to lower your cholesterol.

**Before starting any diet, consult your physician for any special dietary needs.**

## Should I take vitamins?

### In general, vitamins are recommended!

- They are not a substitute for good nutrition!
- They are not pep pills!



### Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA)

The official standards of human nutrient requirements set by the National Academy of Sciences. The nutrient requirements for all adults age 51 years and older are grouped together.

### Multiple Vitamins

Usually provide 100% of the Recommended Daily Allowance. Are a good choice with or without minerals to ensure adequate nutrient intake.

### Therapeutic (*high-potency*) Vitamins

High-potency vitamins may be appropriate for some individuals.

### Megavitamins

Very high doses of vitamins. There is no proof that high doses help, and too much of some vitamins can cause problems.

### Natural Vitamins

A natural vitamin is no better than the synthetic vitamin, which you can buy in the pharmacy. Often more expensive as well.