

# Facts on Multivitamin Supplements

## DOES MY CHILD NEED A MULTIVITAMIN?

Food is the best way for your child to get all the vitamins and minerals that he/she needs. Eating fruits, vegetables and whole grains also provide fiber and other phytochemicals ("fight-o-chemicals" are plant compounds that fight disease) that a supplement will not offer. As seen below, however, there are some children who do not eat enough of certain foods and WILL need a supplement.



If your child eats...	Then supplement with...
Little or no meat or iron-rich foods	A daily multivitamin with iron
No dairy or calcium- enriched foods	Calcium & Vitamin D (check with your doctor for proper dosage)
No animal products (vegan)	Vitamin B12 and possibly iron
Little or no fruits or vegetables	A daily multivitamin

Many foods that we eat, such as breakfast cereal and juices are fortified with important vitamins and minerals – remember to read the Nutrition Facts label. Your child may be getting more vitamins and minerals than you think. However, if your child does not eat enough of one or more major food groups then they may need a multivitamin supplement.



## GENERAL POINTS TO CONSIDER

- Always store multivitamins safely out of reach and in childproof containers. Iron and fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K) can be **toxic** if consumed in large doses.
- Let your child's health care provider know if you plan on giving your child any dietary supplements.
- Consider taste and appeal (since the label won't mean anything if you can't get your child to take them!). If your child is 11 years or older and prefers to swallow rather than chew a multivitamin, then it is safe to start an adult multivitamin.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Daily Values (DV) listed on supplement labels are actually based on outdated recommendations. The latest nutrient intake recommendations from the Institute of Medicine are called **Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs)**. To show this, a comparison of selected nutrients of the DVs and the DRIs for children is shown in the table below:



### DAILY VALUE(DV) COMPARED TO DIETARY REFERENCE INTAKE (DRI)

Nutrient	DV	Nutrient Recommendations by Age (DRI)					
		1 - 3 years	4 - 8 years	9 - 13 yr girls	9 - 13 yr boys	14 - 18 yr girls	14 - 18 yr boys
Iron (mg)	18	7	10	8	8	15	11
Calcium (mg)	1,000	500	800	1300	1300	1300	1300
Vitamin A (IU)	5000	1000	1333	2000	2000	2333	3000
Vitamin C (mg)	60	15	25	45	45	65	75
Vitamin D (IU)	400	200	200	200	200	200	200

Source: <http://www.iom.edu/Object.File/Master/7/296/webtablevitamins.pdf> and <http://www.iom.edu/Object.File/Master/7/294/0.pdf>

## CHOOSE WISELY

Choose a multivitamin which supplies approximately 100 % DV. Remember that this may be MORE or LESS than your child's actual nutritional needs. Encourage your family to include all food groups and eat a variety of food everyday. This will encourage your child to eat a balanced variety and is the best way to ensure an adequate nutrient intake.

## Websites to visit for more information:

Mayo clinic pediatrician answers questions on multivitamins  
[www.mayoclinic.com/health/multivitamins/AN01406](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/multivitamins/AN01406)

Search for "vitamin supplements" @  
<http://www.medem.com>

Choose the article " Does Your Child Need Vitamin Supplements?" for recommendations of American Academy of Pediatrics on vitamin supplements