

WHY TAKE NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS?



by Dr. Lawrence Wilson, MD

Many people ask why one needs to take vitamins or minerals in dosages exceeding the recommended daily allowances? Among the reasons are depleted soil, low-nutrient crops, food processing and the use of pesticides and herbicides on our crops. Others include stress, special circumstances like pregnancy, and that we use nutrients for therapy, not just to avoid deficiency diseases. Let us discuss the topic of nutritional supplements in detail.

FALLACIES OF THE RDAs AND MDRs

Government bureaucrats meet periodically to decide the levels of the recommended daily allowances (RDA) or minimum daily allowances (MDRs) of common nutrients. The main criterion is the amount needed to prevent deficiency diseases. Vitamin C deficiency causes scurvy, vitamin A deficiency causes night blindness, and B1 deficiency causes pellagra.

While this approach is okay as far as it goes, these recommendations have little to with optimum health. One of every two Americans will contract cancer and 50% of the population by age 40 have a chronic illness. In theory, most of these people meet or exceed the RDAs for nutrients.

The theory of the RDAs ignores more subtle aspects of nutrition such as the effect of vitamin C or zinc on tumor inhibition. This is much harder to measure, so it is ignored. The government requires that companies print the percentage of the RDA on each supplement bottle. This can cause alarm until one understands why the RDAs are inappropriate and often irrelevant.

BIOCHEMICAL INDIVIDUALITY

For optimum health, one needs different concepts of nutrition. One of these is biochemical individuality. The term was coined by Dr. Roger Williams to describe his research finding that nutritional needs vary tremendously from person to person.

From this perspective, averages and standards mean very little. I use hair mineral analysis to assess each person's oxidation rate, stage of stress, trace element levels, toxic metal levels, digestive adequacy, state of the immune system and other factors that can be identified on the test.

I also take into account each person's age, sex, weight and health conditions including pregnancy and acute or chronic illnesses. All these affect one's nutritional requirements.

ORTHOMOLECULAR NUTRITION

Orthomolecular nutrition is related to biochemical individuality. The term was coined by the late Dr. Linus Pauling. It means to give the amount needed of a nutrient, not some average or standard amount.

My recommendations differ from those of many orthomolecular physicians in that we use foods and nutrients not just to correct symptoms, but to balance body chemistry. For example, a person in an alarm stage requires more calcium, copper, magnesium, choline and inositol. However, excessive vitamin B-complex or C may be harmful for that person.

A person in the exhaustion stage of stress requires more B-complex and C and less copper. By properly combining nutrients and taking into account mineral levels, ratios and patterns, our programs are more precise and correction deeper and more permanent.

OTHER REASONS FOR HIGH NUTRIENT DOSAGES

I also recommend higher dosages of certain nutrients for other reasons. These include:

Most people today are born Depleted and Toxic

Even if one eats the best food, and one's health were perfect, most of us are born today with nutritional deficiencies, thanks to deficiencies in our parents. Both nutrient deficiencies, and toxic metals that require extra nutrients for their removal, are passed from mother to child through the placenta.

Today's soil is Depleted

Many soils are low in zinc, manganese, chromium, molybdenum, calcium and magnesium. This means that although one eats an excellent diet of organic foods, one will not obtain all the nutrients one needs.

High-yield crops are deficient in certain Nutrients

Ten times the amount of wheat is grown on the same land as was grown 100 years ago. Today's wheat contains about 6% protein whereas 100 years ago it contained 12-14%. Trace mineral levels are similarly much lower due to high-yield farming methods.

Modern fertilizers do not supply enough Trace Elements

One hundred years ago, manures were used extensively for fertilizer. Today, superphosphate fertilizers have largely replaced manures. These contain mainly nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus and are deficient in the trace elements contained in manures.

Superphosphates often act more as growth stimulants. This has contributed greatly to depletion of the soil and crop minerals. This includes organically grown food, although it is much better.

Pesticides and Herbicides

Both will kill soil microorganisms and affect the nutrition of the crops. Soil microorganisms are needed to make minerals and other nutrients available to plants. The result is lower nutrient content. Also, our bodies require extra nutrients to process pesticide residues that remain inside the foods.

Many pesticides are deadly chemicals that severely tax the human system. Some contain lead, arsenic and other toxic metals that slowly accumulate in the body unless and until one follows a health program designed to remove them.

Our laws currently allow sewage and factory sludge to be sold as fertilizer that contains significant quantities of toxic metals. These add greatly to our toxic metal burden and require extra nutrients to help remove them from the body.

Long-distance transportation of many foods diminishes their Nutrition

Many foods are grown thousands of miles from population centers. They may spend a week on trucks or trains to reach you.

As soon as a food is harvested, the levels of certain nutrients begins to diminish. This is another factor that reduces our nutrient intake and increases the need for supplements.

Food processing often drastically reduces Nutrient Content

Refining of wheat to make white flour removes 80% of its magnesium, 70-80% of its zinc, 87% of its chromium, 88% of its manganese and 50% of its cobalt.

Refining sugar cane to make white sugar removes 99% of its magnesium and 93% of its chromium. Polishing rice removes 75% of its zinc and chromium. Canned food may be quite old. Frozen foods are nutritionally better but not as good as excellent fresh vegetables, meats, dairy and other products.

Food additives can further deplete Nutrients

Thousands of artificial flavors, colors, dough conditioners, stabilizers and preservatives are added to many foods. While some are harmless and may increase the value of food, many are toxic and can deplete the body of nutrients. For example, EDTA added to some frozen vegetables to preserve the color of the vegetable does so by removing vital minerals from the vegetable so it does not "tarnish".

Weakened digestion and resulting poor absorption of Nutrients

A result of eating refined, low-quality food with hundreds of food additives is that most people's digestion is impaired. This further impairs nutrient absorption and increases nutritional needs. This is why in nutritional balancing programs, everyone is given a digestive aid and liver detoxification supplement.

Stressful Lifestyles

This will deplete many nutrients including calcium, magnesium and zinc. Zinc begins to be eliminated from the body within minutes of a stress. This is why many people have white spots on their fingernails, for example.

Stress causes excessive sympathetic nervous system activity, which reduces digestive strength. This, in turn, reduces nutrient absorption and utilization even further. Thus, anyone under stress will need even more nutrients than those that live a very peaceful and quiet existence.

Nutritional Supplements For Healing Illnesses

The use of food extracts, isolates and even synthesized vitamin and mineral supplements for healing is extremely well-documented, even if it is denied by some "health authorities". Literally millions of pages of research document the benefits of supplementary nutrient therapy for a wide range of illnesses.

Supplements For Mental And Emotional Healing

Many mental, emotional problems and neurological conditions such as depression, anxiety, epilepsy and many others also respond very well to nutrient supplementation programs.

This is another area of nutrition that is sadly overlooked by the psychological professions as well as by modern psychiatry. Their dependence on drugs is for one reason only. They do not understand the connection between nutrients in the brain and behavior. If they did, they would jump on nutritional balancing science, as it is so powerful, safe and, in many cases, quite simple as well.

If they at least acknowledged the toxicity to the nervous system of common metals like copper, cadmium, mercury and others, we would all be far better off. The drugs are a very poor substitute for fixing brain chemistry, which, as stated above, is often not so difficult if one is trained in this area.

Special Life Situations

Many life situations also require extra nutrition, including:

- Babies, children, the elderly and athletes.
- Anyone who is ill, particularly those with a chronic illness.
- Pregnant women, and even more so, lactating mothers.
- Anyone who is taking certain medical drugs such as blood pressure pills, anti-depressants or birth control pills, for example.
- Anyone who eats refined foods or chemical additives.
- Those who eat in a hurry, eat in their cars or have other eating habits that impair the absorption of nutrients.
- Anyone using over-the-counter drugs that affect the stomach such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (Aleve, Motrin, Tylenol, Excedrin, etc).

Add up the numbers in these groups and you have most of the population! Yet few health professionals are taught that almost everyone has special nutritional needs that require extra nutrients beyond that which is available from only the highest quality food, eaten in a slow, peaceful manner.

Supplements For Mental or Spiritual Development

An important part of nutritional balancing science is that Dr. Eck found that certain nutrients given at the right time in the right quantities will activate the higher centers in the brain. This has to do with helping people to fulfill their true potential as a human being. Most often this does not occur because the nervous system is depleted and toxic.

For example, zinc and selenium in the proper bioavailable forms are among the most important nutrients that usually need to be supplemented. This is due to widespread deficiencies of these nutrients in the soils and foods of the planet.

In addition, the omega 3 fatty acids and kelp or another iodine supplement are critical for development. This can never happen in the same way using toxic drugs or with just the older methods such as relaxation or meditation.

OTHER SUPPLEMENT TOPICS - HERBS

Commonly used food supplements include over one thousand herbs. Many come from ancient Chinese, Native American or other healing traditions. Herb texts describe many ways to use herbs for healing and nourishment of the body. Dr. Paul Eck, founder of nutritional balancing science, did not use too many herbs for a number of reasons:

Inability to Balance the Body Precisely

Because herbs contain many nutrients and other substances, it is not as easy as it is with isolated nutrients to use herbs to precisely balance mineral ratios on a hair analysis. Since this is the basis for today's nutritional balancing science, the herbs are of less use.

They are often a Little Toxic

For example, aluminum-containing herbs include peppermint, spearmint and wintergreen. They are helpful to settle an upset stomach, but are also somewhat toxic for this reason. A cup of peppermint tea on a regular basis is therefore not ideal though using it once in a while is fine.

All Chinese or Ayurvedic (East Indian) herbs seem to be somewhat toxic. Occasional use is okay, but regular use is not good at all.

Quality can Vary Tremendously

This problem is getting worse as more people want to use herbs, and there are fewer places to grow them that are free of chemicals and other soil contaminants.

Dosing of Herbs can be Difficult

This means that one does not always know how much to take. If the herb is very potent, much less is needed. This can lead to overdoses.

Combinations of Herbs

This can be even more toxic or may not mix well in other ways. This is the same problem as mixing medical drugs, to a degree. Herbal combinations can oppose each other or impact one another in harmful ways, although herbs tend to be safer than medical drugs.

Cost

Good quality herbs are often costly. Nutritional balancing attempts to keep costs down wherever possible so more people can benefit. This is another reason herbs are not used much in nutritional balancing.

HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES

Homeopathy is a 150-year-old approach to healing that is extremely interesting. It is a type of energetic medicine using thousands of very diluted and “potentized” remedies that begin as common minerals, herbs, and every other substance imaginable. They are prepared in special ways so that eventually just the energy of the substance remains, with little if any of the original compound or substance. When prescribed correctly, which is very difficult, they may have excellent effects on the body and mind. Homeopathic remedies are generally much safer than pharmaceutical drugs. However, they are not easy to use at all. Other problems with them is they do not balance the oxidation rate or mineral ratios, specifically. Therefore, Dr. Eck did not use them and we do not, either.

Exceptions in which they can be helpful are:

1. Symptomatic use. For example, one can go to the health food store and find homeopathic remedies for a cold or flu, to assist sleep, improve digestion, reduce pain and so on.
2. In the future, research may reveal other ways to incorporate them into nutritional balancing protocols in limited ways, such as ‘constitutional remedies’ for various mineral patterns. This is not done today, however.

SUPPLEMENT LEGISLATION

Food supplements in the United States are protected from excessive regulation by the FDA by the Dietary Health and Supplement Education Act of 1994. Though it has been amended, this law essentially classifies supplements differently than drugs as “foods for special use”. Drug companies and their cronies make every effort to regulate supplements out of existence, as supplements often directly compete with drug profits.

Recently, laws were passed in both houses of Congress, led mainly by Ted Kennedy, Dick Durbin, Hillary Clinton and Henry Waxman. The bill requires supplement companies to comply with the same adverse reporting requirements as drug companies. The cost of implementing this bill could drive many smaller supplement companies out of business. And that is the unspoken goal.

The Codex Alimentarius is a second push by international drug companies and some others to reduce our health status further. This way there will be far more demand for patent remedies, which are drugs.

The Codex would also regulate the supplement industry and perhaps eliminate it altogether unless one has a doctor’s prescription. It could reduce the allowable over-the-counter dosages of all vitamins and minerals to levels so low the products won’t be worth producing.

Food supplements often provide 10 to 100 times the Recommended Daily Allowance of a nutrient. They must do so to offset the poor absorption and extra needs of thousands of people.

The Codex rules are already law in parts of Europe and scheduled to begin to take effect in the United States of America in 2009. If we value our freedom to choose and our health, these and similar efforts must be stopped.

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