

# VITAMINS AND NUTRITION

**N**utrition, or the basic components of the food people consume as part of their daily diet, plays a huge role in overall health and wellness. Some of this is due to the role nutrition plays in helping



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people maintain a healthy weight. But certain vitamins found within foods, as well as nutritional supplements, also play distinctive roles within the body.

### Diet and Health

To obtain the maximum health impact from nutrition, people should eat a variety of foods from five distinct groups. Two of the most important groups are fruits and vegetables, and consumption of a wide variety of fruits and vegetables is recommended in order to derive the maximum values of vitamin and minerals from these food groups. Fruits and vegetables offer benefits whether they're served fresh, canned or frozen. However, the labels of fruit juices should be checked closely as many types of juice contain very

little actual juice. In general, 100 percent fruit juice is recommended.

Grains are another important food group, and people should strive to eat more whole grains, which offer more health benefits in general than more refined sources of carbohydrates. When it comes to the dairy group, it's best to choose low-fat sources of dairy, which offer the same benefits of calcium and protein without all the saturated fat. The same goes for the protein group, where lean cuts of meat are typically the best choices for overall health.

Along with variety, eating the correct amount of calories each day is also important when it comes to nutrition for overall health. Monitoring calorie intake can help with

maintaining a healthy weight.

### More on Vitamins and Minerals

Aside from the "big picture" of nutrition, some specific vitamins and minerals found within certain foods can play a direct role in health. Most people can get their needed vitamins and minerals by eating a healthy diet of a broad array of foods, but certain people may need more emphasis on specific vitamins and minerals. For example, calcium and vitamin D are both important

for bone health. Folic acid is especially critical for expecting mothers. And iron plays a large role in the health of the blood and the cells within the body.

Some people can benefit from taking a vitamin or mineral supplement, but they are not needed by everyone and might do more harm than good in certain situations. It's usually best to talk with a health care provider to see if a vitamin or mineral supplement is a good idea.

Sources: [consumer.healthday.com](http://consumer.healthday.com)