

Check Your Multivitamin Supplement

Not all multivitamin supplements are created the same and high amounts of certain vitamins or minerals over time could actually be dangerous while amounts of other things may be assumed to be adequate while actually too small. Registered Dietitian, Joy Supplee, gives a few general tips about what to watch for in a multivitamin supplement.

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Whether or not you may need a multivitamin supplement is greatly debated in health & nutrition circles. In some cases, it might be a good idea but should always be mentioned to your health care provider since there could be interactions between this and medications or other supplements. If you are already taking a multivitamin supplement or are planning to, here are a few things to look for:

Calcium:

If you are not getting your four full servings of dairy products per day or your non-dairy sources of calcium are small amounts, it's often recommended to take a calcium supplement, along with Vitamin D. Most multivitamin supplements only contain very small amounts of calcium. This is because calcium, as a molecule, is very large and to combine it with all the other vitamins and minerals would end up making the supplement too big to swallow. Check the percentage of daily recommended amount on the label.

Iron:

You should not be taking extra iron in a multivitamin/mineral supplement unless you are a growing child or woman who is still menstruating or pregnant or if your doctor has recently told you to do so because you have a low blood iron count. Adult men whom have not been told this by their doctor should not take supplemental iron as it can store in muscle tissue, including the heart, as well as several major organs and can lead to a dangerous condition called hemochromatosis, or iron-overload disease. Hemochromatosis, left untreated, can be fatal.

Vitamin B-6:

This vitamin is often in very high amounts in multivitamins, especially "high potency" versions. Very high amounts of vitamin B-6 over a period of years has been shown to potentially lead to peripheral nerve damage, especially in the hands and feet.

Final thoughts:

If a multivitamin is recommended for an individual, I often recommend that they stick to formulations that are not far above 100% of each nutrient's daily recommended value, especially not in the 1000-5000% ranges or above. I also recommend that you steer away from all the extra "herbs" that can be added for various reasons as many of these have all their own safety concerns. Always tell your health care provider about supplements you are taking so that they can check for safety issues as well. It's a great idea to take your supplements to your next health care provider appointment too. Here's to good health!

For more information on Joy Supplee or her services, please see her site at <http://www.customfitnutrition.net>.