

Vitamins and Minerals for Kids

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Good nutrition is the best way to ensure a healthy body and is your best defense against infections and illness. Good nutrition can be defined as consuming nutrient-rich foods from a variety of sources on a daily basis. We know that the food we eat is comprised of fat, protein and carbohydrates. They are called macro-nutrients. But food is also packed full of micro-nutrients which are vitamins and minerals. Vitamins and minerals do not contain energy (calories) like the macro-nutrients do, but they play a huge role in our bodies' ability to function.

Water Soluble Vitamins

Vitamins labeled as water soluble means that they dissolve in water. These are commonly referred to as b-vitamins plus vitamin C. What is needed by our bodies is absorbed via our small intestine and the remainder is excreted through the urine. This excretion process of excess vitamins keeps us from overdosing. Once the tissues are saturated with what they need, the rest is removed from the body.

B-vitamins and vitamin C are necessary for many processes in the body; from red blood cell formation, healthy skin, good vision, and normally functioning nervous system to a healthy appetite. A deficiency in any one of these vitamins can cause mild to severe health problems, depending on how significant the deficiency is.



Fat Soluble Vitamins

Vitamins labeled as fat soluble means that they dissolve in fat, not water. They two are absorbed via our intestines but are not as easily excreted when there is excess in the diet. The fat soluble vitamins are A, D, E and K. They are just as necessary for a child's body to grow, develop and function.

Minerals

Minerals are yet another category of necessary components needed for a healthy body. The most commonly talked about minerals are calcium, iron, zinc and potassium; although all minerals are needed by the body in some amount.

Vitamins and Minerals

Some vitamins and minerals are best absorbed when taken together. Two examples of this are calcium and vitamin D and iron and vitamin C. If you or your child needs extra calcium for bone health, it is best absorbed by the body when accompanied with vitamin D. This is also true of iron needed for anemia and vitamin C. However, if you feel that you or your child is in need of vitamins and minerals in addition to what is gained from a healthy diet, do check with your doctor or pediatrician before additional supplementation.

Conclusion

The good news is that all of these very important compounds are found in the foods we eat. Eating a well balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains is the best way to ensure a diet rich in vitamins and minerals. It is also important to eat a variety of foods to insure a complete diet.