

Vitamins and Minerals

Vitamins and minerals are essential to your health. Although they do not **give** you energy, they do **assist** in energy-yielding reactions and promote body growth and development. Vitamins and minerals are vital for human function, each one playing a different role. Read on to find out what select vitamins and minerals do and where you can find them!

Vitamin	Function	Overdose/Toxicity	Good Sources
Vitamin A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevents night blindness Promotes healthy eye function Keeps skin, hair, and nails healthy Helps ward off bacterial infection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint and bone pain Hair loss Skin changes Headaches Blurred vision Fatigue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green, yellow, or orange vegetables Cantaloupe Apricots Sweet potatoes
Vitamin B₆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbohydrates and protein metabolism Helps form red blood cells Proper nerve function 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nerve destruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bananas Meats, poultry, fish Potatoes Broccoli Cereals and grains
Vitamin B₁₂	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proper nerve function Helps form red blood cells Builds genetic material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None known 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meats, poultry, fish Milk Eggs Vegans may need supplementation
Folic Acid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DNA and RNA synthesis Helps form red blood cells Important in growth and development Helps prevent birth defects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None known 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orange and grapefruit juice Green leafy vegetables Poultry Supplement recommended for pregnancy Dried beans
Vitamin C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes healing of cuts and wounds Helps resist infection Keeps gums healthy Strengthens blood vessel walls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diarrhea Kidney stones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citrus fruits (oranges, grapefruit) Strawberries Cantaloupe Green or red peppers Broccoli
Vitamin E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps form red blood cells, muscles, and other tissues Antioxidant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Muscle weakness Headaches Fatigue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeds and nuts Seafood Eggs Oils
Calcium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps build strong bones and teeth Involved in muscle contractions and nerve function 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Muscle and abdominal pain Calcium kidney stones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milk and milk products (yogurt, cheese) Tofu Broccoli Calcium fortified orange juice Some fortified cereals
Chromium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works with insulin for proper glucose metabolism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None known 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Egg yolks Meat Whole grains Cheese

Vitamin	Function	Overdose/Toxicity	Good Sources
Iron	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps carry oxygen to body tissues including muscle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liver disease Arrhythmias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red meat, seafood, and fish Dried apricots Dried beans Fortified cereals Supplement recommended for pregnancy
Phosphorus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works with calcium to build and maintain bones and teeth Helps convert food to energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowers blood calcium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dairy products Egg yolks Meat, poultry, fish Legumes Soft drinks
Potassium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vital for muscle contractions and nerve transmission Important for heart and kidney function Helps regulate fluid balance and blood pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slower heart beat Kidney failure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milk and yogurt Many fruits and vegetables (especially oranges, bananas, and potatoes)
Zinc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important in function of many enzymes Wound healing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nausea and vomiting Abdominal pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seafood Meats Eggs Whole grains

Whole foods are the preferred source of important vitamins and minerals for your health. Always look to foods first, before considering a supplement. If you have questions about vitamins, minerals, or nutrition supplements, talk to a nutritionist at McKinley Health Center's Wellness Promotion Unit (333-2714) or the SportWell Center (244-0261).

Developed with assistance from Allison Skae, Nutrition Intern, July 1997.

If you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700.**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web Site at: <http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu>