



STAYWELL

www.intermountainpower.com

July 2020

Brian Coles, Health Analyst

Volume 326

Am I Getting Enough?

A deficiency of virtually any nutrient can lead to body systems rendered inefficient.

Vitamins and minerals are vital to life. The body relies on them to function properly and interact with each other in one way or another. If we get too little of one vitamin or mineral, we can become deficient which leads to failure of the body systems to function properly. This can lead to an imbalance which can prevent other vitamins and minerals from performing their function.

Over time, being deficient, just a little bit, can lead to chronic health problems or failure to thrive and stay as healthy as we can if we had proper levels. Symptoms such as fatigue, susceptibility to infection, cancer, heart disease, brain issues, chronic diseases, and many of the syndromes we face today, come on slowly as a result of these deficiencies.

Foods can improve or worsen the way a person feels. The results can be immediate or accumulate over time. Consuming nutrient rich foods can help an individual feel better, result in fewer aches and pains, and have a direct impact on mood, sleep, and how the person reacts to stress.

Vitamins and minerals are the key nutrients for keeping systems functioning properly.



The greatest source of vitamins and minerals are fruits and vegetables. These are key sources of vitamins and minerals the body

needs to function properly affecting health and quality of life. The negative effects of not eating fruits and vegetables have been known by humans for millennia. Tissue and systems weaken without these super foods and improve with them. Chronic diseases and illnesses are directly related to low consumption of these vital foods.

Vitamins are organic compounds that are considered an essential micronutrient. They are needed and must come from outside sources because the body cannot create them on its own. They must come through foods that we consume. Vitamins do not produce or provide energy directly, but are used in body systems to produce energy, muscle, nerve, digestion and all other systems correctly.

Minerals also must come from an outside source. They assist with metabolism, water balance, and bone health. Each mineral provides or aids a different function. All minerals are important for the body to function properly. If an individual does not get enough it leads to problems. One main function of minerals is building body tissues. They also help sustain body processes.

Just take a supplement, right?

Wrong. Most research demonstrates that supplements alone do not provide the same health benefit as eating vitamin and mineral rich foods. Aristotle got it right when he taught that, "The whole is greater than the sum of the parts." When it comes to nutrition this indicates that taking just part of a healthy food, such as a supplement, is not as beneficial as taking the whole food that contains that nutrient.

Longevity studies have drawn a direct impact with the typical diet within a country and life expectancy. Countries with diets that include a wide variety of fruits and vegetables live longer than citizens in the United States, which ranks forty-third overall in life expectancy. Subsequently the United States has higher rates of illness than other comparable countries and the typical U.S. diet demonstrates this.

Health benefits

- ♥ Eating a diet rich in vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet may reduce risk for heart disease, including heart attack and stroke.
- ♥ Eating a diet rich in several vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet may protect against certain types of cancers.
- ♥ Diets rich in foods containing fiber, such as various vegetables and fruits, may reduce the risk of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.
- ♥ Eating vegetables and fruits rich in potassium as part of an overall healthy diet may lower blood pressure, and may also reduce the risk of developing kidney stones and help to decrease bone loss.
- ♥ Eating foods such as vegetables that are lower in calories, per cup, instead of some other higher-calorie food may be useful in helping to lower calorie intake.
- ♥ Fatigue. Eating fruits and vegetables with vitamins and minerals does not provide energy, but they do help the body produce energy. Being deficient can mean, that even if a person consumes adequate calories, lacking certain nutrients can limit the body's ability to produce energy. So, eating foods packed with vitamins and minerals can help individuals feel more energetic.
- ♥ For example, low iron – Anemia is the direct result of too little iron in the diet. Red blood

cells help transport oxygen to the cells in the body. Anemia is a low red blood cell count since red blood cells transport oxygen. The body will have less energy when oxygen levels are not met.

- ♥ Another example is low Vitamin D – Modern society chemical functions and health can be enhanced or limited by the foods we consume. Limitations can trigger imbalances that lead to mood issues such as, irritability and mood swings. Eating a variety of healthy foods, specifically fruits and vegetables, is vital to good mental health. Different foods have different effects on the brain.
- ♥ When we avoid certain foods, types or classes, key nutrients will be missing. Color variety is very important. Different colors of foods have different nutrients. For example, if an individual does not eat green leafy vegetables, he/she is missing certain key nutrients that help the brain stay healthy.

Sources

- 1) <https://www.organicfacts.net/health-benefits/minerals>
- 2) <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/fruits-nutrients-health>
- 3) <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/vegetables-nutrientshealth#>
- 4) <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2102rank.html>
- 5) <http://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/stats/Health/Heart-disease-deaths>
- 6) <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2013/01/09/168976602/u-s-ranks-below-16-other-rich-countries-in-health-report>
- 7) www.webmd.com, The Causes of Women's Fatigue
- 8) www.webmd.com, The Truth About Vitamin D: Vitamin D Food Sources
- 9) www.psychologytoday.com, Fighting Fatigue with Diet.
- 10) www.healingwithnutrition.com, Chronic Fatigue
- 11) <http://www3.nd.edu/~jkaiser/PsychPapers/Psychiatric%20Nutrition%20Therapy%2008.31.06.pdf> Psychiatric Nutrition Therapy: A Resource Guide for Dietetics Professionals Practicing in Behavioral Health Care

