

## Supplements

Supplements are just that, they supplement what you are not getting enough of through whole food sources. There are many days when you just do not have the time to sit down and eat 4 - 6 times a day, which means we are missing meals and depriving our bodies of vital supplies. Most of us are not getting all of our essential vitamins and minerals, because we do not eat 5 servings of fruit and 5 servings of vegetables a day.

If you are like many people you have probably taken certain products off and on with no real consistency. Maybe you are confused about what you should take or wonder if supplements are even necessary at all?

There is still a small (and shrinking) number of nutritionists and dieticians who claim that supplements are unnecessary and that we can get everything we need from our food.

It makes sense that our bodies would more efficiently absorb and utilize nutrients from food rather than from supplements. However, long term analyses of people's actual diets, has shown that they do not receive their minimal requirements for 15 of the essential vitamins and minerals on a regular basis from diet alone.

In a perfect world where we would have our own organic garden complete with balanced, mineral rich soil, and eat an abundance and variety of only fresh, whole foods, ever day, never having to skip a meal or eat processed or fast food, and weren't exposed to things such as excess stress, exercise, pollution, and chemicals that increase our need for certain nutrients, then maybe it would be possible to achieve optimal health from our food alone.

For most of us living in the real world, even with an above average diet, it is impossible to eat optimally all the time and most people are

not getting everything their body requires every day for optimal health and fitness.

Nutrient deficiencies can drastically affect your energy level, your long-term health, and your body's metabolism and ability to burn bodyfat. You may be surprised that malnutrition is a major cause of obesity in the so called advanced countries!

If a body is deficient in even a few vitamins or minerals, this can cause excessive hunger. Also when there is inadequate intake of essential nutrients, energy production will be decreased and fat cannot be efficiently burned.

To illustrate a few of many such examples: The B vitamins are essential to energy production and fat is burned at a greatly reduced rate if Vitamin B5 or B6 are undersupplied. Insufficient Vitamin E can cut fat utilization in half! Chromium, a mineral that is now deficient in 90% of our diets, is essential for muscle growth and normal insulin metabolism and therefore very important for control of bodyfat.

Following are a nutritionist's recommendations for five key supplements that will make the biggest impact on your overall fitness, health, and energy, performance, and ability to burn bodyfat.

## **1. A Green Supplement**

**Spirulina** is a 'superfood' derived from algae. It provides almost the entire spectrum of essential nutrients required by the body. It is a complete nutrient and on the long run takes care of the most basic needs of the human body.

It is a worthwhile investment in your health. After just a couple weeks of daily use, most people experience a noticeable difference in energy level. Within a relatively short time, you may also begin to

notice other benefits such as increased mental clarity, nicer skin, better digestion, better sleep, and overall just a cleaner, healthier feeling. You have to try it to believe it!

## **2. A Protein Supplement**

Whey protein provides the body with essential vitamins and minerals, as well as curbs your cravings for sugars and salts. Make sure you are taking a shake that contains protein and carbohydrates, protein by itself does not absorb very quickly.

A good quality whey protein can be utilized by your body even more efficiently than protein from other sources such as chicken or fish or vegetarian sources.

When choosing a protein powder, look for supplements containing primarily whey isolates (either high alpha whey isolates, which are the best, or cross-flow micro filtered whey isolates). Because whey isolates are expensive to produce, many companies will mix these isolates with less expensive protein concentrates (such as caseinate and milk protein isolates) and still call them isolates. Read your labels. Not only are whey isolates the highest quality dietary proteins known to modern science, but they also have demonstrated a significant ability to increase our immune response – particularly in the fight with cancer.

These proteins also aid in fat burning and muscle growth, work as an appetite depressant, and can be used by those who are lactose intolerant.

Avoid protein supplements with artificial sweeteners such as aspartame and others.

Those with allergies or intolerances to whey protein supplements can use brown rice protein, hemp protein, soya protein.

## **3. Essential Fats**

Do not miss out on essential fatty acids (EFA's). EFA's help with absorption of fat soluble vitamins and minerals, as well as aid in the production of healthy hair, skin, and nail cells. Essential fatty acids also, reduce the risk of heart disease and some forms of cancer, improve mood, and decrease inflammation. This means they help protect cell membranes and fight against the affects of aging.

Many people are still eating too much fat. Surprisingly, many of these same people are actually deficient in the extremely important essential fats (Omega 3, 6, 9). These essential fats are important for a healthy brain and nervous system, immune system, and skin; for mood control; and also for efficient burning of bodyfat. Omega 3 in particular is most deficient in our diets and must be supplemented. Good sources of the essential fats are foods such as high-fat fish (e.g. salmon, mackerel, and sardines), raw nuts and seeds (e.g. walnuts, hemp seed and ground flax seed).

#### **4. A Good Quality Multi-Vitamin/Mineral**

Vitamins are essential for the normal growth and development of all human beings. They are vital for the maintenance of healthy cell tissues and organs. Vitamins also help process proteins, carbohydrates, and fats required for utilization.

Macro and Trace Minerals are involved in electrolyte balance of body fluids, and are essential for normal cellular activity. Minerals also provide hardness to bones and teeth.

There is no need for mega-dose Vitamin and mineral supplements (except when needed to correct a severe imbalance or nutrient deficiency), but a quality multi-vitamin/mineral is a great addition to an already healthy diet. It will help fill in the gaps on those days when you do not eat as well as you would like to. It also makes it easier to reach your recommended intake of certain nutrients that are most difficult to get from food alone such as iron, zinc, chromium and others. Remember that many vitamins get lost or degraded during the cooking

process.

## **5. Extra Calcium/Magnesium**

This important supplement recommendation is primarily for women as most men seem to achieve their calcium requirement from their diet and multi-mineral.

Besides being critical for maintaining strong bones, there is a strong calcium / bodyfat connection? Estimates of the relationship between calcium intake and weight indicated that a 1,000 mg calcium intake difference is associated with an 8 kg difference in body weight.

Many women are not getting enough calcium in their diets.

According to the National Institute of Health, the recommended total calcium intake (from diet and supplements) is 1,200 – 1,500 mg per day for teens and young adults under the age of 25, 1,000 mg a day for women between 25 and 50 years of age, 1,200 – 1,500 for pregnant or lactating women, and 1,500 mg per day for postmenopausal women. The average calcium consumption among women is currently only 600 mg per day or less.

Increasing this average intake by about 600 mg through supplements and making a conscious effort to include more high-calcium foods in your daily diet, can have a dramatic effect on body weight and also ensure that you are not stealing calcium from your bones to make up for a shortage in your diet. It's always best to take a calcium/magnesium combination (possibly with the addition of vitamin D depending upon how much you are getting from other sources).

Magnesium is best taken directly through consuming magnesium rich foods rather than supplements.

Your supplement program does not have to be confusing. Keep it simple and take these five supplements on a regular basis and they can provide many benefits including:

- enhancing weight loss
- enhancing performance
- boosting energy levels
- improving appearance
- stabilizing mood
- protecting your long-term health