

Vitamins

We hear a lot about vitamins and how important they are. The reason you need to consume vitamins every day is to maintain the body functioning, through healthy cells, nerves, skin and tissues. Essential vitamins include A, B, C, D, E and K. Vitamin C, for example, is needed for the body to be able to produce collagen, providing structure to blood vessels, bones and ligaments. Fruits and vegetables, including citrus (like oranges and lemons), strawberries and peppers are excellent sources of vitamin C. Folate, which is a B vitamin, is a vital nutrient, particularly beneficial to women trying to get pregnant. A folate deficiency can potentially cause **serious problems**, including birth defects and blood diseases. Beans, broccoli, spinach and asparagus are some of the best folate foods, but in some cases, a doctor might recommend people take a **folate supplement**, especially women trying to get pregnant.

Vitamin D is another essential vitamin, which helps maintain calcium stability. It can be absorbed from the sun, but, of course, this comes with its own risks, such as melanoma and premature ageing of the skin. This essential nutrient can also be found in some food sources, such as fatty fish (tuna, mackerel and salmon), oranges, beef liver, soy milk, ~~cheese~~ and egg yolks. Vitamin A is needed for healthy skin, protecting against infections, and boosting the immune system. Some food sources include carrots, **sweet potato**, melons, pumpkin, mangoes, tomatoes, broccoli, and beef liver. Vitamin E helps protect cells from damage and prevents blood clots, thrombosis and atherosclerosis by improving the body's use of oxygen. It is also good for the skin and improves fertility and wound healing. Some foods with vitamin E include sunflower seeds, peanuts, sesame seeds, peas, sweet potato, wheat germ, tuna and salmon. Lastly, vitamin K helps control blood clotting and is important for bone health. It also assists in preventing heart disease and reducing neural damage. Foods rich in vitamin K include cauliflower, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, lettuce, cabbage, beans, potatoes, tomatoes and peas.

