



Who needs supplements?

Vitamins and minerals are essential to our health and many people take a supplement to increase their intake. I am very often asked if this is necessary because many people believe that a healthy, varied diet will provide all the nutrients that most people need to maintain general health and well-being.

Even if you accept that the official standards for vitamin and mineral intakes are adequate for good health, the evidence is overwhelming that most people in the UK fail to come close to meeting those requirements. For instance, Government studies show that most of us do not eat enough fruit and vegetables, certainly not as much as five daily servings. In fact our bad habits are so ingrained that new incentives will offer a free piece of fruit for each child in some schools and fruit vouchers to encourage more consumption!

Diets have changed greatly over the last fifty years and this change has not necessarily been for the better and there are many reasons for this. Firstly, a growing population and demand from consumers has forced growers to find ways to increase yield.

Forced production of food has resulted in depleted soil through over use and only selected minerals are added to fertilisers rather than the full spectrum.

Optimum nutrition is essential for health and this means that the body is provided with all of the known nutrients needed for health and well-being at the same time and in the right ratios. Very often what we think of as a balanced diet may be *healthy* but it's not *optimum*.

Today the leading causes of death in Europe and the United States are not contagious, infectious diseases but rather are the very chronic degenerative diseases caused by poor nutrition predicted by scientists more than 50 years ago.

Soil erosion is the next potential problem. It is estimated that 85% of America's topsoil is at the bottom of the ocean. This means that they are feeding 250 million people and serve as the 'bread basket to the world', on 15% of their topsoil. Is it any wonder that the foods produced and subsequently eaten are mere shadows of those produced 50 or 100 years ago? Where America goes Britain tends to follow in 5-10 years.

The third factor in the depletion of our diet has been the food industry itself. Through over-processing of virtually every food we eat, dozens of nutrients are either destroyed or greatly decreased.

Lastly our own processing of foods in our own kitchens, which occurs through improper preparation, deals the final blow, resulting in a diet that is rich in calories and little else.

The greatest enemy to the vitamin family is oxygen or *oxidation*. Oxidation occurs rapidly after a living fruit, grain or vegetable is separated from its source. This was well illustrated by *Dr. Michael Colgan* in his book *Your Personal Vitamin Profile*. He cites the studies done with oranges grown in Florida. When fresh picked they contained an

average of 180 mg of vitamin C per orange. After storage, shipping and retail super-market display they had lost ALL of their vitamin C!!! If a food can be grown in a British climate buy it locally rather than from supermarkets where fruit and vegetables are very often imported from foreign countries. You will also be supporting your local growers.

Cooking or heating of foods is another way in which many of the nutrients are destroyed. Canning, drying and even freezing further destroys them by exposing foods to environments that nature had ever intended for them.

All in all, growing crops, processing foods, transportation, storage and poor preparation has exposed us. It has been established by many surveys that chronic degenerative disease could be prevented or greatly reduced by improving the diet through the addition of dietary supplements.

Modern diets, because of food processing, storage, transport and preparation, cannot provide the optimal levels of nutrients needed for health and well being.

Supplementation is the only practical answer to this growing problem.

Ref: My thanks to Dr L Bannock PhD FRSH MIBiol for his paper: The Justification for Nutritional Supplementation, 2 September 2000