

From A to Zinc

These charts highlight several vitamins & minerals, their functions & food sources, and the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for adults. Remember that just because a vitamin or mineral performs a specific function, it does not mean more is better. Supplements providing mega doses of certain vitamins & minerals can produce toxic effects. If you decide to supplement your diet with a multi-vitamin & mineral formula, choose one that supplies $\leq 100\%$ of the RDA for most nutrients. Avoid exceeding the Upper Limit (UL) of any nutrient (from fortified foods & supplement sources combined).

Vitamin	What it does	Best food sources	RDA	UL
A (beta-carotene can be converted to vitamin A)	Important for vision, immune system, healthy skin and mucous membranes	Fortified milk, eggs (carrots, sweet potatoes, green leafy veggies are rich in beta-carotene)	Men: 3000 IU** Women: 2333 IU ** Equal to 900 mcg retinol or 10,800 mcg dietary beta carotene.	10,000 IU** ** Equal to 3000 mcg retinol or 36,000 mcg dietary beta carotene.
D	Helps calcium absorption and retention, bone mineralization	Fortified milk, eggs, fish oils (self-synthesis with sunlight on skin)	≤ 50 yrs. old 5 mcg (200 IU)* 51-70 yrs. old 10 mcg (400 IU)*	50 mcg (2000 IU)
E	Antioxidant (stops toxic substances from building up in body)	Vegetable oils, wheat germ, nuts, seeds	15 mg (22 IU natural or 33 IU synthetic)	1000 mg (1500 IU natural or 1100 IU synthetic)
K	Blood clotting, bone formation	Green leafy veggies (can be made by intestinal bacteria)	Men: 120 mcg* Women: 90 mcg*	Not established
C	Antioxidant, needed for healthy bones and teeth, wound healing, immune system, iron absorption	Citrus fruits, melons, berries, broccoli, tomatoes, potatoes, peppers	Men: 90 mg Women: 75 mg	2000 mg
B1 (thiamin)	Needed to metabolize carbohydrates to energy, nerve function	Whole and enriched grains, pork, beans	Men: 1.2 mg Women: 1.1 mg	Not established
B2 (riboflavin)	Needed to metabolize food for energy, healthy skin, normal vision	Whole and enriched grains, meat, milk products	Men: 1.3 mg Women: 1.1 mg	Not established
B3 (niacin)	Needed to metabolize food for energy, maintains healthy skin and nervous system	Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, milk, beans, nuts, whole and enriched grains	Men: 16 mg Women: 14 mg	35 mg
B6 (pyridoxine)	Needed for protein metabolism, helps make red blood cells	Meat, fish, poultry, beans, whole grains, green leafy veggies	19-50 yrs.old: 1.3 mg 51+ yrs.old: W-1.5 mg M-1.7 mg	100 mg
Folate	Needed to form new cells	Green leafy veggies, orange juice, beans, enriched grains	400 mcg** ** For women of child-bearing age, this should be from a supplement or fortified foods.	1000 mcg
B12 (cobalamin)	Needed for form new cells, maintains nerve cells	All animal foods, fortified cereals and soy products	2.4 mcg** ** For adults over 50 years, this should be from a supplement or fortified foods.	Not established

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Minerals	What it does	Best food sources	RDA	UL
Calcium	Needed to build and maintain bone, normal blood clotting, muscle contraction, nerve transmission	Milk products, fish with edible bones, broccoli, collard greens, fortified soy products and juices	11-19 yrs. old: 1300 mg* 20-50 yrs. old: 1000 mg* >50 yrs. old: 1200 mg*	2500 mg
Phosphorus	Part of cell membranes, needed for energy transfer	Meat, poultry, fish, milk products, nuts, beans	700 mg	4000 mg
Magnesium	Needed to build bone, muscle contraction, nerve transmission, protein synthesis	Nuts, beans, whole grains, green leafy veggies, seafood, chocolate	Men: 420 mg Women: 320 mg	350 mg (taken as a supplement)
Potassium	Helps regulate fluid and mineral balance, muscle contraction, nerve transmission, protein synthesis	All fresh whole foods: fruits, veggies, meats, milk, grains, beans	4700 mg*	Not established
Iodine	Part of thyroid hormone which regulates growth and metabolic rate	Iodized salt, bread, seafood, plant and animal products grown in most parts of the country	150 mcg	1100 mcg
Iron	Oxygen transport in blood and muscle cells, needed for use of energy	Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, leafy green veggies, dried fruit, enriched grains	Men: 8 mg Women: 18 mg (Post-menopause, need only 8 mg)	45 mg
Zinc	Part of many enzymes, involved in immune reactions, taste perception, wound healing, sperm production	Seafood, meat, poultry, beans, whole and enriched grains	Men: 11 mg Women: 8 mg	40 mg
Selenium	Antioxidant	Seafood, meats, whole grains, veggies (depending on soil)	55 mcg	400 mcg
Fluoride	Helps form bones and teeth, makes teeth resistant to decay	Fluoridated drinking water, tea, seafood	Men: 4 mg* Women: 3 mg*	10 mg
Chromium	Works with insulin to help the body use blood sugar	Whole grains, meat, nuts, seeds	Men: 30-35 mcg* Women: 20-25 mcg*	Not established
Copper	Important in hemoglobin formation; part of many enzymes	Seafood, meat, nuts, seeds, drinking water	900 mcg	10,000 mcg

* These numbers represent Adequate Intakes (AIs) since not enough information was available to set RDAs for these nutrients.