

CONTINUOUS HEALTHY LIVING

SUPPLEMENTS & HOW TO CHOOSE THEM



Today, the supplement industry is simply exploding.

You can find supplements at the supermarket, on the internet, in pharmacies, health shops, just about anywhere and in a variety of forms such as tablets, capsules, tinctures, powders, gummies, drinks.

On paper, they all promise the same thing. But does all this correspond to reality?

The price differences can be considerable, the temptation is therefore great to choose a cheaper product.

Unfortunately, cheap dietary supplements are really not a good option for the following reasons:

- They are often synthetic, which means they are made from unnatural sources and our body often will not recognise these molecules. It will either excrete them or simply store them as garbage.
- They are full of additives, sugars, and other toxic molecules and can be harmful. Check the ingredient label and skip supplements that contain ingredients such as artificial colouring, titanium dioxide, soy lecithin, BHT, maltodextrin, talc, hydrogenated oils, high doses of caffeine or aconite.
- The dosage is not appropriate therefore they have very little or no effect, or you have to take 10 pills to have a desired effect
- They do not have the cofactors, molecules that work in synergy to help them to be absorbed. You will notice that in nature, no molecule is on its own, and there is a good reason for that !

WHAT ARE SUPPLEMENTS ?

The purpose of supplements is exactly what their name implies: **to supplement your diet.**

- Supplements include: Vitamins
- Minerals
- Herbals & botanicals
- Amino acids
- Enzymes
- and many other products

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DO I REALLY NEED TO TAKE SUPPLEMENTS ?

I often hear this question.

The answer is, absolutely YES, If you wish to have optimal health.

Here is why: It is all to do with the nutrient content.

- ① Even if your food comes from your garden, it is likely to contain insufficient nutrients due to issues like poor soil quality.
- ② Foods come from far away, are often full of pesticides, additives, colourants, we cook them & process them. This all leads to the fact that the nutrient levels of the foods we eat have been significantly reduced or even, quite often, absent altogether. It would not be exaggerated to say that today, more than ever, our bodies are starved of nutrients.
- ③ There are a lot of nutrient thieves out there. Just to name a few: tres, parasites, additives & pesticides, some natural molecules present in certain foods (exp: some polyphenols present in tea that block the iron absorption)...

This does not mean that you should be taking supplements all the time or that they should be a substitute for an unhealthy diet.

There are certain vitamins, minerals, trace elements, fatty acids and enzymes that you require from your diet, because your body can't produce them.

- The real goal of using supplements is:to enhance an already-balanced diet
- correct the nutritional deficiencies and constitutional (genetic) weaknesses
- speed up the process of healing

and so should be taken as a corrective cure.

Research shows us that many adults and children experience at least one type of nutrient deficiency, often more than one, even when they have a very healthy diet.

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FOR WHOM THEY ARE REALLY IMPORTANT

- Here is for whom the supplements are even essential: those that don't eat a nutritious variety of foods
- those who consume a large amount of processed foods, sugar, refined grains and hydrogenated vegetable oils
- those that have a chronic or more serious condition
- those that are experiencing fatigue, brain fog, sleeping problems, muscle aches, poor recovery from workouts, acne, digestive problems
- elderly - as we age our level of digestive enzymes reduces so we do not absorb food well
- people that diet all the time
- those that have digestive problems
- people who consume a lot of excitants (alcohol, coffee, black tea, cigarettes)
- those that have high stress levels
- athletes and active people
- pregnant women
- those exposed to toxins
- vegetarians or vegans

HOW TO CHOOSE A GOOD SUPPLEMENT ?

Unlike prescription medications, there are no laws that determine whether dietary supplements are effective before they are marketed and sold to the public.

Even more important than for food, you want to look for products with exceptional quality and bioavailability (easy absorption).

I recommend purchasing:

- natural products
- safe compositions. This means very little or no binders, fillers or, god forbid, toxic substances or allergens.
- foods-based supplements whenever possible as they are easier to digest and absorb
- supplements that have added superfoods, herbs, enzymes or botanicals such as seaweed or algae, medicinal mushrooms, adaptogen plants
- supplements that are fermented as fermentation is a form of pre-digestion which makes them easier to absorb

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- supplements with cofactors that work in synergy (help to support specific functions and reinforce each other's effects)
- from laboratories that you know and trust and who invest in quality
- supplements that are well dosed. This will also tell you a lot about the lab that produces them. If their supplements are not well dosed and do not have cofactors, then they are likely not to be a good source.
- The best supplements for you will depend on factors like your :
- gender, age, medical history, genetics, level of physical activity, diet and your current state of health.

We also have to remember that even the best supplements can't take the place of eating a variety of nutrient dense foods.

IMPORTANT ADVICE REGARDING SUPPLEMENTS

- Avoid to self subscribe supplements. You really want to have a minimum knowledge or have worked with a naturopath or a functional doctor for some time before starting to choose your own supplements. Sometimes you can do more damage than good. I see this all the time.
- Definitely avoid subscribing to others. You have been prescribed some supplements, they have worked for you, so you decide to prescribe some to your family or friends. Remember we are all different and what is good for you may be damaging to others. Much better option is : help them to eat well.
- Beware of taking supplements with medications. Although a large number of supplements have absolutely no interactions with medications, some do, and can really cause a lot of damage or make your medication less effective. Speak to your doctor or your naturopath if you are on medications.
- Be especially careful about taking new supplements if you're taking medications like blood thinners, antidepressants, birth control pills or chemotherapy drugs to treat cancer unless you are working with a trained professional
- Although lot of the supplements work better in higher dosages, if you self-supplementing and are not very knowledgeable, opt for a smaller dosage just to be on the safe side
- Particular caution for : pregnant women, nursing mothers or children. Most supplements have not been tested on this category and therefore make sure they are safe before taking them.

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SUPPLEMENTS I RECOMMEND YOU TAKE REGULARLY:

- Vitamin D - do check the levels regularly via a blood test (optimum levels 60-80ng/mL)
- Magnesium - you can not really overdose. The gauge is your stool consistency, as magnesium is laxative at higher levels
- Iron - you want to be careful on this one. Do not self-subscribe it.
- Iodine (5% Lugol's iodine is your best bet)
- B12 - this one is important for vegetarians and vegans and all those that are anemic
- Vit C - you can not overdose on vit C. Your body simply excretes it after vitamin C has done its job. Vitamin C is one of those that works much better on high doses
- Vit A - is the most important vitamin for auto-immune diseases and eye health
- Zinc - is essential for a healthy immune system as well as your hormonal system
- Probiotics - are crucial for your gut health, but did you know that they are equally important for your immune system
- Omega-3 fatty acids - are major anti-inflammatory and cognitive health supplement
- Potassium - we are lacking so much today
- Collagen - must be taken with Vit C
- Adaptogen plants - are an essential part of today's modern busy lifestyle for the stress
- Medicinal mushrooms - for the healthy immune system, high nutrient content and their healing properties. See my instagram post on medicinal mushrooms "which one for what"

Now, regularly is from time to time, not all the time. Some of them you need to take 1-2x/year, some of them you need to take more often. This is personal and depends on your gender, level of activity, your geographic location and your constitution (genetic makeup). This is when you are relatively in optimal health. If you have chronic issues, this is different and you may have to take certain supplements for a while.

WHAT IS THE BEST TIME TO TAKE SUPPLEMENTS ?

It really depends on the type of supplement, although consistency is probably most important. Take supplements with food (unless otherwise recommended) to boost absorption and reduce the risk of side effects like nausea.

Check the instructions to see if you need to split doses throughout the day, since the body absorbs smaller doses of many nutrients better than large ones.

Iron is one supplement that is best absorbed on an empty stomach, such as first thing in the morning, and taking probiotics about 30 minutes before a meal or just before bed (min 2-3h after dinner) is a great option.

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DOSSAGE

Supplement manufacturers will suggest the serving size that is recommended for most adults when they are healthy. If in doubt, go with their recommendations.

Below are general recommendations for common supplements (again, do your research or ask me:

- Vitamin D: 2000 - 10000 IU /day
- Probiotics: 50-100 billion/day
- Iron: 8 to 18 mg/day
- Zinc 20-30mg/day
- Vit B12 - 1 mg/day
- Potassium 100mg/day
- Magnesium: 400-1200 mg/day
- Vitamin A: 2000 - 10 000 IU/day
- Vitamin C: 5-10g/day
- Omega-3s: 1000-2000 mg of combined EPA and DHA daily

Some supplements work better with food and some on an empty stomach.

General rule of thumb: everything that is cleansing is away from food; vitamins and minerals are always taken with food.

Again, it is important to educate yourself or work with a qualified professional. By sticking to a regular schedule you're more likely to remember them each day.