

Nutrients are better than supplements

Vitamins and Minerals: Natural versus Synthetic

Many people believe vitamin and mineral supplements to be natural, but they are not. Although supplements—vitamin and mineral pills—have their place and are useful therapeutic agents, only foods and herbs provide whole-spectrum nutrients as only nature can.

Most supplements, while useful in the same way as pharmaceutical drugs can be valuable, are generally made from unnatural substances—contrary to what the labels may claim. On the other hand, natural whole herbs are concentrated foods, containing vitamins, minerals, and many other substances. For example, ginger root contains more than 300 natural substances, all perfectly balanced, for easy and effective absorption.

If our bodies are lacking in certain nutrients, taking that one particular nutrient in a pill form does not guarantee absorption into our body chemistry. For example calcium supplements are either made from rocks, coral or industrial mineral compounds, which are very difficult for the body to absorb.

Over time, calcium builds up in the joints, causing pain and deformities (it shows up especially in the hands) and, therefore, does not get absorbed into the bones, teeth, hair, etc., where it should go.

Our bodies are designed to absorb nutrients from food and herbs rather than from synthetic sources. The following is a list of natural herbs known for their high nutritional contents:

Oatstraw

The straw of oats is very high in silica, which is needed for calcium absorption to build and maintain strong bones. Just 100 gm of oatstraw contain 1200 mg magnesium, 1430 mg calcium and 1.83 mg silica, as well as many other vitamins and minerals. Studies have shown that oatstraw ranks as the best source of natural magnesium.

Seaweeds

Seaweeds such as kelp, dulse, bladder wrack, nori are high in protein, low in fat, and incredibly rich in absorbable minerals, vitamins and trace minerals. For example 100 gm of kelp contains 3040 mg calcium, 867 mg magnesium, 5610 mg sodium, 2110 mg potassium, 6600 IU vitamin A and countless other nutrients.

Spirulina

Spirulina is one of nature's most concentrated sources of vegetarian nutrition. It is a complete protein, with all 22 amino acids, the entire vitamin B-complex, including B-12 (one teaspoon supplies 2 ½ times the RDA), carotenes, minerals, and essential fatty acids. Digestibility is high, for both immediate and long-range energy. Spirulina is also well known for its ability to curb appetite, because your brain has registered the amount of nutrients the body has received.

Bee Pollen

Bee pollen is a complete food and is

Staying Healthy the Natural Way



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often referred to as nature's "perfect" food, containing all ingredients necessary for life. With 22 amino acids, it contains more protein than beef. It also contains carbohydrates, fats, enzyme precursors, vitamins and minerals. Start with one grain and over several months build up to 1 tablespoon a day. (Do not use if you are allergic to bee products.)

Alfalfa

Alfalfa contains all necessary vitamins and minerals for life. They are in trace amounts, therefore it is not enough to simply eat alfalfa. Alfalfa is also high in easily absorbable B-12 vitamin, an important vitamin for vegetarians. Also, 100 gm of alfalfa contains 24,800 IU of vitamin A!

Stinging Nettle

Nettle is very high in minerals, especially iron, useful for children and adults experiencing anemia, as well as silica, potassium, and vitamin K, to guard against excessive bleeding. 100 gm of nettles contains 2900 mg calcium, 860 mg magnesium 15,700 IU vitamin A and .47 mg zinc.

Raspberry Leaf

The leaf of the raspberry bush is high in minerals, especially iron and manganese. It is excellent for pregnant women, to support a healthy pregnancy and childbirth, as well as enriching mother's milk. Children, too, benefit from red raspberry leaf tea because of its highly nutritional value. (When my children were home with a cold or flu and were too sick to eat, I used to make them a cup of warm raspberry tea.)

Rosehips

Rosehips are the remaining hips after a rose has finished blooming. Rosehips are rich in vitamin C and bio-flavonoids important in the building and maintenance of a good blood vascular system. Rosehips have 60 times the amount of vitamin C that is found in lemons.

Hibiscus

Hibiscus is high in chromium, a necessary nutrient used by the body in the process of metabolizing carbohydrates, especially sugars.

Celery

Celery is high in organic sodium, which is needed for healthy joints and lining of the stomach. This is not the salt you find in grocery stores. Celery can be used in cooking to replace table salt by people with sodium restrictions in their diets. Celery is also high in potassium; 100 gm contains 5760 mg of potassium.

Wheatgrass

Dr. J. Ritchason in his book "The Little Herb Encyclopedia" writes that 100 pounds of fresh wheat grass has the nutritional value of about 1.5 tons of vegetables. It is high in chlorophyll and helpful in promoting general healing to the body.

Even though the amounts of vitamins and minerals found in herbs and foods may not match the amounts found in supplement pills, it is important to consider that the absorption rate is the key element here, and not how many milligrams you put into your mouth. It is easier for the body to digest and absorb nutrients from food and herbs than from a pill.

For more information about detailed nutritional analysis of herbs, please consult Mark Pederson's book "Nutritional Herbology."

The herbs discussed in this article can be purchased at The Herb Stop located in Pine, 4004 N. Highway 87. If you have any questions, Leilah can be reached at 928-476-4144 or by e-mail at herbstop@gmail.com. The FDA has not approved these statements. The information given is not meant to act as a prescription, medical advice or therapeutic advice. Consult your healthcare professional prior to using botanicals discussed in this column.

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