

HELP WITH VITAMINS

Staying Healthy with Dr. Aieta, N.D.



Dr. Aieta,

I recently saw my family doctor and asked him if he thought that I should be taking any supplemental vitamins or a daily multi-vitamin. He told me that as long as I ate healthy, there would be no need for me to do so. What is your opinion?

Elisabeth A.

I totally disagree with your family doctor.

As a naturopathic physician, my medical education was rooted deeply in understanding how nutrition plays an enormous role in combating disease and achieving optimal health.

If you look at the food supply today and read labels, you will see that most foods found in a box, a bag, or a can are refined. When a food is refined, it loses most of its nutrients. A good example is white bread, which is made from processed and bleached wheat flour which is

then fortified with a fraction of the 14 or so vitamins that were stripped out during processing.

Even fresh foods can lose nutrients between the moment they are picked to the moment you take a bite. By the time most fresh fruit gets to the store, sits on a shelf, is purchased, sits in the refrigerator, is cooked, and finally eaten, only a fraction of the nutritional value is left to be absorbed.

One would have to eat 8-12 times the typical amount of produce, in some cases, to absorb what much of the farmland foods contained decades ago. While a small percentage of people are able to grow and pick their own food, the rest of world relies on several days- to several weeks-old, processed, canned, frozen or previously cooked food to try to stay healthy. Just look at the number of Americans who are obese, and suffering from chronic disease, and it's apparent that the nutritional void is taking a toll.

Everybody needs adequate vitamins to work, grow and develop, which makes those vitamins extremely important. The human body also requires vitamins to ward off disease, boost immune system response and even regulate our mood. Many vitamins help produce energy for the body. People who still feel tired, regardless of making good efforts to eat right, may be taking in inadequate amounts of vitamins.

Calcium, which is a mineral, is widely recommended by doctors to help prevent and treat the disease osteoporosis, but many physicians fail to recommend enough vitamin D to take with it to aid in its absorption.

I routinely check patients' vitamin D levels and find the majority to be low. Many patients tell me that they drink enough vitamin D fortified milk and that they should have plenty of vitamin D in their system. The problem is that most people drink skim or 1-percent milk, which is, essentially, refined, meaning the fat is stripped

out as well as all the fat-soluble nutrients including vitamin D.

If you are interested in optimal health, take a good quality multi-vitamin/mineral supplement each day. I would highly suggest you work with a physician who is trained in nutrition and who can test you for various nutrient deficiencies and prescribe the right dosage and combination of vitamins and minerals.

Dr. Frank Aieta is a board-certified and licensed Naturopathic Physician with a private practice in West Hartford, Conn. If there is a specific topic you would like to see addressed in an upcoming column, you can e-mail him at DrAieta@aol.com, or visit www.DrAieta.com for additional information.

NOT TOO BUSY

Women's Fitness with Lisa Thomas



So you think you're too busy to exercise? I'm sure you can find 1,000 excuses not to get to the gym or to exercise, but most, if not all, are nowhere near good enough. The truth is we don't need much time to exercise – besides, it is your health we are talking about, and that's worth making time for.

Try the following workout that can last from 12 to 30 minutes; depending on how much time you have.

The key to burning calories during short workouts is to crank up the intensity and work harder than usual. This means increasing your perceived exertion to between 5-9, on a scale of 1-10. To burn more calories shoot for 12 minutes of:

- Running – You don't have to sprint, but try to run faster than normal, or alternate between walking and jogging.
- Speed Walking – Walk as fast as you can without breaking into a run. It's harder than you think.
- Walking stairs – Run or walk up a flight (or more) and recover by slowly walking back down.
- Hill-walking – Find a medium-sized hill and walk or run up as fast as you can. Recover with a slow walk back down and repeat.
- Any gym machine – Hop on any cardio machine for a 12-minute blast. Try something different: Stairmaster and the rowing

machine are two tough ones.

- Jump rope – Get some good tunes to pump you up for this one.

Any one of these exercises for 12 minutes will have you working hard. You can also do one set of each of these for 30 seconds to a minute, and move on to the next. The object is to put together a variety of moves for an intense workout.

The moves below are great ways to get your heart rate up in a short time. Turn this workout into something that fits your fitness level and schedule.

- Jumping jacks – These little buggers are self-explanatory. Oh, and no cheating.
- Jogging in place – Lift your knees and pump your arms to get your heart rate up.
- Plyometric lunges – Begin in a basic lunge position. In an explosive movement, jump, switch legs in the air and land with bent knees into lunge.
- Ski hops – With feet together, jump from side to side, landing with knees bent. The wider you jump and the lower you squat into the jump, the harder you'll work.
- Jump rope – You know the drill.
- Skipping – It's much harder than you remember.
- Step jumps – Stand in front of step or platform and jump onto it, landing with both feet (harder) or a staggered landing. Step down and repeat.

- Squat hops – Stand with feet wide. Lower into a squat and hop forward four times, keeping feet wide, legs bent into squat. Walk back and repeat.

- Hill climbers – In a push-up position one leg remains out straight and the other bends at the knee into the chest and quickly alternate the knee in.

- Squat thrust – Standing up in a wide-leg squat, quickly drop hands down to the ground and shoot legs out behind you, return just a fast into the squat.

Make sure you warm up with some light cardio. And don't forget a quick cool down. Yeah, it's really that easy.

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