

NUTRITION BITS AND BITES

Vitamin supplements for kids



Caution around Gummy vitamins

Gummy vitamins are often marketed as a fun and convenient way for kids to get their vitamins.

These vitamins are very similar in taste and texture to gummy candies.

This can send the wrong message to kids that vitamins= candies which can lead to accidental overdose of these vitamins. Store all vitamins, especially gummy ones, out of children's reach.

Does my child need to take a vitamin supplement?

As a parent or caregiver we often worry if our child is getting all the nutrients they need. Frequently children will barely touch their lunch or only have a few bites at supper time. This can lead us to feel that we need to “fill in the gaps” with a vitamin supplement. But are they really necessary?

If your child eats a varied diet; including some intake of fruits or vegetables, protein foods (meats, fish, milk products, and legumes) and grains (breads and cereals) a vitamin supplement is not usually needed. The human body is very efficient at getting all it needs from food and combinations of foods assist in absorption.

If, however your child has a specific condition that prevents absorption of some nutrients, excludes whole food groups, or follows a vegan diet, additional supplements may be warranted. It is best to talk to your primary care provider to discuss what supplements are needed.

If you choose to provide a vitamin supplement to your child it is good to remember that a supplement is not a cure for an unbalanced diet and it is not intended to replace food or food groups. Check out the chart on the next page to see how you can “supplement” with different foods to meet nutrient needs.

Supplementing with Food

Trying to get more of this.....

Try adding some of this.....

Calcium	Dairy products, almonds, baked beans, eggs, tofu
Iron	Red meat, spinach, fortified cereals, beans and lentils, dried fruit
Vitamin B12	Dairy products, meat, nutritional yeast, eggs
Omega 3 fats	Fish, ground flax, chia seeds, walnuts
Fibre	Pears, plums, berries, nuts, seeds, beans, lentils, oatmeal

Kids Pix Trail Mix

The seeds and dried fruit provide iron, fibre, and protein in a fun mixture



Dried banana slices	½ cup
Sunflower and pumpkin seeds	½ cup each
Chopped dates	1/3 cup
Dried cherries or strawberries	1/3 cup
Chopped dried mango and apricots	1/3 cup each
Raisins or dried cranberries	1/3 cup
Chocolate chips (optional)	1/3 cup

Combine ingredients in a bowl.

Portion into ½ cup servings. Store at room temperature.

Recipe source: unlockfood.ca

** Refer to the Allergy Newsletter (September issue) for substitution ideas.



Scan the QR code for more FAQs about vitamin and mineral supplements

For more information on nutrition and healthy eating, visit:

<https://www.southernhealth.ca/finding-care/health-info-for-you/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/>

To access previous school nutrition newsletters, visit:

<https://www.southernhealth.ca/whats-happening/nutritional-newsletters/>

Contact Dial-a-Dietitian 1-877-830-2892 Health Links 1-888-315-9257 Nutrition Services Team 1-204-856-2055

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