

## Why a MULTIVITAMIN & MINERAL MATTERS

In the June 19, 2002, issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association contained two articles devoted to the importance of multivitamin supplementation.<sup>1,2</sup> In no uncertain terms, Fletcher and Fairfield state:

"In the absence of specific predisposing conditions, a usual North American diet is sufficient to prevent overt vitamin deficiency diseases. ... However, insufficient vitamin intake is apparently a cause of chronic diseases. ... A large proportion of the general population is apparently at increased risk for this reason. ... We recommend that all adults take a multivitamin daily."<sup>2</sup>

Take a look at what was discovered with these studies:

- One randomized, double blind, placebo-controlled trial to determine if one year of multivitamin supplementation could help cognitive function in men and women 65 years of age or older.<sup>3</sup> Compared with controls, the supplement group showed a significant improvement in all cognitive tests except long-term memory.
- Supplementation with a multivitamin/mineral also proved to lower homocysteine levels in a group of 50-87 year-olds who already consumed a folate-fortified diet.<sup>4</sup> No significant changes in dietary intake were noted during the intervention. Based on this work, we can suggest that routine multivitamin supplementation might have a profound impact on preventing heart disease.
- We can also protect vision with multivitamins.<sup>5</sup> Compared with nonusers, the five-year risk for any cataract was 60 percent lower among persons who, at follow-up, reported the use of multivitamins, or any supplement containing vitamin C or E, for more than 10 years.
- Multivitamin supplementation appears to help people better cope with stress.<sup>6</sup> The degree of improvement was statistically significant and greatest in the supplemented group (151 supplemented and 149 placebo) for all psychometric instruments, with this beneficial effect increasing over the course of the day.
- Supplementation with multivitamins has even been shown to reduce birth deformities.<sup>7</sup> Research found a 48 percent risk reduction for cleft lip (with or without cleft palate) among infants of mothers who used multivitamins during the periconceptional period, or who started multivitamin use during the first postconceptional month (after controlling for several covariates).
- Most are well aware that radiation exposure can damage DNA and cause birth defects and cancer in children of exposed parents. However, very few of us would have considered that vitamin deficiencies can mimic radiation exposure. Ames<sup>8</sup> explains: "A deficiency of any of the micronutrients: folic acid, vitamin B<sub>12</sub>, vitamin B<sub>6</sub>, niacin, vitamin C, vitamin E, iron, or zinc mimics radiation in damaging DNA by causing single and double-strand breaks, oxidative lesions, or both. Common micronutrient deficiencies are likely to damage DNA by the same mechanism as radiation and many chemicals... Remedying micronutrient

deficiencies should lead to a major improvement in health and an increase in longevity at low cost."<sup>8</sup>

According to Ames,<sup>8</sup> the RDA is mainly based on information on acute effects, and the optimum amount for long-term health is generally not known. Optimum intake of a micronutrient can vary with age and genetic constitution, state of well-being, and is also influenced by other aspects of diet. The optimum amount to protect against genomic damage is generally thought to be higher than the current recommended daily allowance, and a sizeable percentage of the population is deficient relative to the RDAs.

Our recommendation is that everyone strives for a healthy diet and takes a quality multivitamin and mineral. Though there are many on the market, quality and potency varies greatly. Our recommendation for a high quality, most cost effective multi is the Broad Spectrum produced by Nutriguard Research. It is available at our office or you may go to [www.nutriguard.com](http://www.nutriguard.com).

#### References

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