



Food Alternatives to Dietary Supplement Use

Dietary supplements are an insufficient substitute for a well-balanced diet. Many of the nutrients found in food work together to provide health benefits (such as the vitamin D and calcium that is found in dairy foods). Eating whole foods provides the body with vitamins, minerals, energy, and health promoting plant compounds such as anti-oxidants. For information on dietary supplements, visit Operation Supplement Safety at <http://hprc-online.org/dietary-supplements/opss>

Supplement / Function:	Example of Food Sources (By Food Group):
Antioxidants: Promotes health benefits such as decreasing the risk of developing cancer and chronic disease	Vegetables/Fruits: Artichokes, kale, sweet potato, carrots, avocado, papaya, berries (black, blue, raspberries, cranberries), cherries, pears Herbs: Cloves, cinnamon, turmeric, ginger, oregano
Vitamin A: Helps maintain vision, immune function, and reproductive health	Vegetables/Fruits: Spinach, carrots, sweet potato, mango, cantaloupe, peach, watermelon Protein: Beef liver, chicken liver Grain: Bran, oatmeal
Vitamin C: Helps the body to absorb the mineral iron and important to wound healing and immune function	Vegetables/Fruits: Cabbage, broccoli, citrus fruit such as oranges, lemons, and tangerines, strawberries, pineapple, blueberries, tomatoes
Vitamin D: Helps the body absorb calcium for healthy teeth and bones	Meat/Fish: Salmon, sardines, herring, mackerel Fats (oils): Cod liver oil Dairy: Non-fat or skim, 1%, 2% milk
Vitamin E: Helps the body produce red blood cells	Vegetables: Spinach, broccoli Protein (nuts/seeds): Sunflower seeds, almonds, hazelnuts Fats (oils): Wheat germ oil, corn oil, sunflower oil
Vitamin K: Promotes blood clotting and bone health	Vegetables/Fruits: Leafy green lettuce, spinach, cabbage, broccoli, kale, Swiss chard, strawberries Protein: Beef liver, chicken liver
Calcium: Important to bone structure, nerve function, and muscle contractions	Vegetables: Spinach, kale Protein: Sardines, salmon, tofu Dairy: Non-fat or low-fat yogurt, milk (skim, 1%, 2%), cheese (Swiss, cheddar, colby, mozzarella)
Iron: Helps red blood cells carry oxygen throughout the body and helps muscles store and use oxygen	Fruits: Raisins Grains: Ready to eat fortified whole grain cereal, oatmeal Protein: Tofu, Cashews, pistachios, soybeans, lima, chickpeas, kidney
Zinc: Important to the function of the immune system, wound healing, and the breakdown of carbohydrates	Protein: Oysters, lean cuts of poultry and beef Grain: Ready to eat fortified whole grain cereal
Thiamin (B1): Helps the body change carbohydrates into energy	Protein: Lean cuts of pork and turkey, salmon, black or navy beans Grains: Whole wheat (bread, pasta), ready to eat fortified whole grain cereal, hominy, oatmeal
Riboflavin (B2): Important to the production of red blood cells	Protein: Beef liver, lean cuts of lamb Grains: Bran, oatmeal, fortified whole grain cereal Dairy: Non-fat/low-fat yogurt
Niacin (B3): Helps the body maintain healthy skin and nerves	Protein: Lean cuts of poultry, beef, pork, salmon, halibut, tuna (canned) Grains: Fortified whole grain cereal, barley, oatmeal
B6: Helps maintain brain function	Vegetable: Potato Protein: Lean cuts of poultry, beef liver, halibut Grains: Brown rice
Pantothenic Acid (B5): Important for the metabolism of food and the production of hormones	Vegetables/Fruits: Broccoli, kale, cabbage, sweet potato, avocado Protein: Lean cuts of poultry Grains: Fortified whole grain cereal
Cobalamin (B12): Helps produce red blood cells and maintains the central nervous system	Protein: Beef liver salmon, lean cuts of poultry, beef, pork Grains: Fortified whole grain cereal Dairy: Non-fat/low-fat yogurt, cottage cheese, Swiss cheese
Folate (B9): Necessary for the production of DNA and works with vitamin B12 to produce red blood cells	Protein: Chicken liver, black eyed peas, black beans, pinto beans Vegetables/Fruits: Spinach, asparagus, collards, oranges, tomatoes Grains: Whole grain (bread/pasta), fortified whole grain cereal