

ARE DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS NECESSARY?



By Joe Upton, MD, Anti-Aging Specialist

Americans spend billions of dollars on alternative medicine each year and much of this goes toward nutritional supplements. A common question that often arises is, "If I eat a healthy diet, do I REALLY need additional supplements?" The answer to that question is personal and individualized. Of course, dietary supplements should not be counted on to replace healthy foods. However, here are a few reasons to consider taking supplements.

Many Americans have a nutrient-deficient diet. Many of us are not eating nutrient-rich foods such as fresh fruit, vegetables, nuts and whole grains. Instead we choose the quick, easy and convenient foods which are often highly processed, high in calories and low in nutrient value. According to a National Health and Nutritional Survey, the majority of Americans are falling short of healthy nutrition, averaging only 1 to 2 servings of fruits and vegetables per day.

Remember that the recommended dietary allowances (RDAs) were developed back in the 1940s. These were meant to be general guidelines and were formed when our food and soil quality were much different. Our health should be individualized, not generic. These long-standing RDAs may not adequately meet the nutritional needs of every individual so many years later.

As already alluded to, the quality of our food has changed over the years. Specifically, the nutrient-density of our food has changed. Unless you have your own garden, most of us consume commercially-grown produce. Mass produced, commercial farming has created soil which is deficient in many essential micronutrients. If the nutrients are deficient in our soil, they will be deficient in the foods we eat. Moreover, as

more and more foods are processed, the nutrient value is diminished even further. This often results in foods having fewer vitamins, minerals and healthy fatty acids.

We also need antioxidant protection. Our bodies are constantly being exposed to a high level of oxidative stress. Oxidative stress is always occurring in our bodies, and chronically elevated oxidative stress is not healthy. This oxidative stress can come from a multitude of places including pollution, smoking, lack of exercise, emotional stress, sleep deprivation, diets high in sugar and unhealthy fats, illegal drugs, and some medications. Scientific evidence shows that chronic, elevated oxidative stress leads to many chronic diseases. So a diet (and supplement regimen) rich in antioxidants can be beneficial in battling this oxidation onslaught to our body.

Keep in mind that while dietary supplements can help maintain nutrient levels and help protect against some chronic diseases, they are NOT a complete solution. Healthy aging requires a healthy lifestyle. A balanced, nutritious diet, exercise, adequate sleep, stress reduction, and appropriate supplementation can help the body function better and improve overall health.

A customized supplementation plan is one of the benefits of the Anti-Aging program at PRO Sports Club. For more information, please email antiaging@proclub.com, or (425) 861-6290.

FREE

ANTI-AGING SEMINAR

with Dr. Upton
6:30 p.m.
Decathlon Room

Learn firsthand from the Medical Director of the Anti-Aging Center at PRO Sports Club how to take control of how you age with customized optimal health. Dr. Upton is board certified in Family Medicine, and Anti-Aging Medicine with the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine.

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