

VITAMIN support

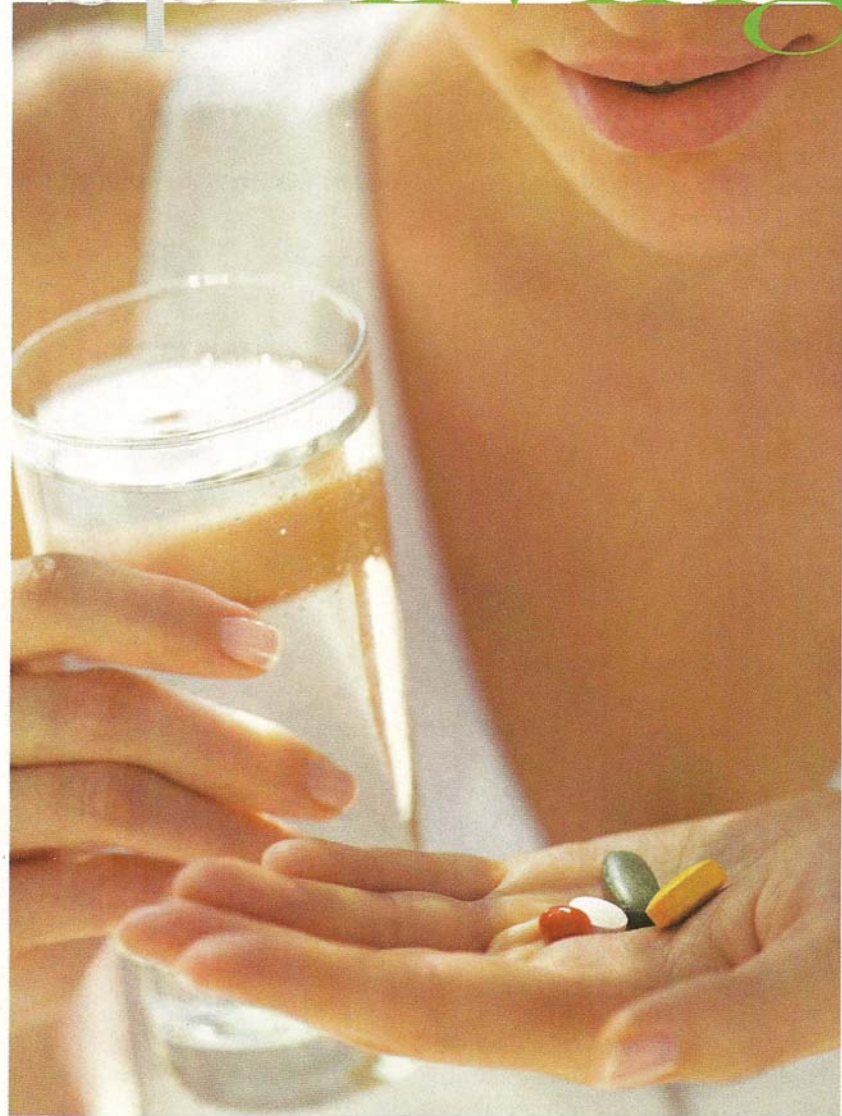
Adding nutritional supplements to a healthy diet can help you live well longer. BY AMY WESTERVELT

ONE OF THE MOST ESSENTIAL ways to support optimal wellness throughout life is to eat a balanced diet packed with all the nutrients your body needs to keep it functioning properly. Unfortunately, even if your diet includes nearly all of the recommended food groups and quantities, it may not be enough to keep your body in peak condition. According to a 2007 study by the Council for Responsible Nutrition, nearly 80 percent of doctors recommend that their patients take multivitamin/mineral (MVM) supplements to ensure against deficiencies, and a separate study published in *JAMA* found that most people do not consume enough vitamins through food alone.

This becomes an even greater issue as you age because the digestive system becomes more sluggish over time, which inhibits nutrient absorption. Fortunately, it's never too late to boost your nutrient intake; according to David Heber, M.D., director of the UCLA Center for Human Nutrition, supplements can be beneficial even for adults who just begin to take them in midlife.

How They Work

Vitamins play a critical role in helping the body derive energy from food and in regulating various biochemical reactions, such as the synthesis of neuro-



transmitters. With the exception of D and K, vitamins cannot be made by the body and thus must be consumed.

MVM supplements designed for optimal aging include formulations that help reduce oxidation and inflammation (which are believed to lead to chronic illness) while also providing nutritional support for bone, joint, and eye health.

Choosing the Right One

The supplement industry is not regulated by a third-party organization

such as the FDA, which means the safety and efficacy of supplements do not have to be verified. To ensure you're picking the right MVM supplement, it's a good idea to consult your health practitioner, who can also help you decide whether to augment your MVM supplement with any additional nutrients to address specific vulnerabilities, such as a family history of a particular disease. (To conduct further research yourself, visit consumerlab.com, a supplement watchdog site.) »

(continued from page 49)

One of the first things to consider when selecting any supplement is whether the formulation is water soluble or fat soluble, which affects how it is processed in the body. With water-soluble vitamins, anything that is not immediately used is eliminated. Any excess from fat-soluble vitamins, however, is stored in the body and can accumulate to toxic levels. "It is important to understand that more is not better," says Jeanette Bronée, founder of Path for Life, a nutrition center in New York City. She notes that excess vitamins can stress the body and cause inflammation.

Another key consideration when choosing an MVM supplement is the origin of its nutrients. Many are chemically sourced: created in a lab and isolated from the elements that make them effective when ingested as part of a whole food. As a result, many nutrition specialists advocate formulas made from whole-food ingredients, which they say are better absorbed and used by the body.

The Bottom Line

Although taking the right MVM supplement can help address the internal and external signs of aging, eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables remains extremely important. According to Zhaoping Li, M.D., professor of medicine and clinical chief of the Division of Clinical Nutrition at UCLA, Alzheimer's disease and other age-related conditions are often linked to the reduced consumption of fruits and vegetables. She recommends eating as many varieties of produce as possible and enhancing meals with spices, which slow oxidation. Between the nutrients in your diet and those provided by your MVM supplement, you'll be healthier and more energized in no time. □

body boosts Overwhelmed by the variety of supplements available? These professional-grade pills, powders, and potions will help you stay beautiful inside and out. NATALIE RIOS

IF YOU WANT

TRY

HOW IT WORKS

Increased energy



Agebest Basics Focused Energy
> \$25, agebestbasics.com

Guarana delivers a burst of energy without the crash associated with caffeine.

Better skin



Murad Pomphenol Sunguard Dietary Supplement
> \$36, murad.com

Pomegranate extract and ellagic acid help protect skin from the sun and prevent free-radical damage.

Less cellulite



Equavie Cellulite
> \$48, equavieusa.com

Marine calcium and safflower oil extract stimulate the breakdown of stored fat; red seaweed, flaxseed oil, and pine extract stimulate microcirculation; and vitamin E prevents oxidation of skin lipids.

Better brain function



Pevonia Botanica AccuMind
> \$35, pevonia.com

Folic acid, ginkgo biloba, and Asian ginseng help support healthy blood flow to the brain and boost cognitive function.

Faster metabolism



Pure Inventions Raspberry Green Tea Extract
> \$31, pureinventions.com

A mega dose of polyphenols helps support the immune system, stimulates metabolism, and increases energy.

Hormonal balance



Nordic Naturals Omega Radiance
> \$38, nordicnaturals.com

Essential fatty acids help keep hormone levels stable and promote clear, healthy, and glowing skin.

Anti-aging benefits



Nektre Internal Affair
> \$55, nektre.com

Anti-inflammatory green tea and white willow bark combine with alpha lipoic acid in this powder to repair skin and prevent collagen damage.

Optimum fitness



Sonya Dakar Ultima Power
> \$59, sonyadakarclinic.com

A combination of protein, fiber, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals supports cardiovascular and bone health while reducing fat and preserving lean muscle.