

VITAMINS

Vitamins and minerals are substances that are found in foods we eat. Your body needs them to work properly, so you grow and develop just like you should. When it comes to vitamins, each one has a special role to play. For example:

- Vitamin D in milk helps your bones.
- Vitamin A in carrots helps you see at night.
- Vitamin C in oranges helps your body heal if you get a cut
- B vitamins in leafy green vegetables help your body make protein and energy.

Vitamins Hang Out in Water and Fat

There are two types of vitamins: **fat soluble** and **water soluble**. When you eat foods that contain **fat-soluble** vitamins, the vitamins are stored in the fat tissues in your body and in your liver. They go and wait around in your body fat until your body needs them.

Fat-soluble vitamins are happy to stay stored in your body for awhile - some stay for a few days, some for up to 6 months! Then, when it's time for them to be used, special carriers in your body take them to where they're needed. Vitamins A, D, E, and K are all fat-soluble vitamins.

Water-soluble vitamins are different. When you eat foods that have water-soluble vitamins, the vitamins don't get stored as much in your body. Instead, they travel through your bloodstream. And whatever your body doesn't use comes out when you urinate. So these kinds of vitamins need to be replaced often because they don't like to stick around! This crowd of vitamins includes vitamin C and the big group of B vitamins - B1 (thiamin), B2 (riboflavin), niacin, B6 (pyridoxine), folic acid, B12 (cobalamine), biotin, and pantothenic acid.

Vitamins Feed Your Needs

Your body is one powerful machine, capable of doing all sorts of things by itself. But one thing it can't do is make vitamins. That's where food comes in. Your body is able to get the vitamins it needs from the foods you eat because different foods contain different vitamins. Though some kids take a daily vitamin, most kids don't need one if they're eating healthy foods.

Now, let's look more closely at vitamins - from A to K:

Vitamin A

This vitamin plays a really big part in eyesight. It's great for night vision, like when you're trick-or-treating on Halloween. Vitamin A helps you see in color, too, from the brightest yellow to the darkest purple. In addition, it helps you grow properly and aids in

healthy skin.

Which foods are rich in vitamin A?

- eggs
- milk
- apricots
- nectarines
- cantaloupe
- carrots
- sweet potatoes
- spinach

The B Vitamins

There's more than one B vitamin. Here's the list: B1, B2, B6, B12, niacin, folic acid, biotin, and pantothenic acid. Whew - that's quite a group! The B vitamins are important in metabolic activity - this means that they help make energy and set it free when your body needs it. So the next time you're running to third base, thank those B vitamins. This group of vitamins is also involved in making red blood cells, which carry oxygen throughout your body. Every part of your body needs oxygen to work properly, so these B vitamins have a big job.

Which foods are rich in vitamin B?

- whole grains, such as wheat and oats
- fish and seafood
- poultry and meats
- eggs
- dairy products, like milk and yogurt
- leafy green vegetables
- beans and peas
- citrus fruits, such as oranges

Vitamin C

This vitamin is important for keeping body tissues, such as gums and muscles in good shape. C is also key if you get a cut or wound because it helps you heal. This vitamin also helps your body resist infection. This means that even though you can't always avoid getting sick, vitamin C makes it a little harder for your body to become infected with an illness.

Which foods are rich in vitamin C?

- citrus fruits, like oranges

- cantaloupe
- strawberries
- tomatoes
- broccoli
- cabbage

Vitamin D

No bones about it . . . vitamin D is the vitamin you need for strong bones! It's also great for forming strong teeth. Vitamin D even lends a hand to an important mineral - it helps your body absorb the amount of calcium it needs. Which foods are rich in vitamin D?

- milk and other dairy products fortified with vitamin D
- fish
- egg yolks

Vitamin E

Everybody needs E. This hard-working vitamin maintains a lot of your body's tissues, like the ones in your eyes, skin and liver. It protects your lungs from becoming damaged by polluted air. And it is important for the formation of red blood cells.

- whole grains, such as wheat and oats
- wheat germ
- leafy green vegetables
- sardines
- egg yolks
- nuts

Vitamin K

Vitamin K is the clotmaster! Remember the last time you got a cut? Your blood did something special called clotting. This is when certain cells in your blood act like glue and stick together at the surface of the cut.

Which foods are rich in vitamin K?

- leafy green vegetables
- liver
- pork
- dairy products, like milk and yogurt

When your body gets this vitamin and the other ones it needs, you'll be feeling A-OK!