

Vital Nutrition

Vital nutrients are absolutely needed by the body to function properly. An almost endless selection of nutrients can be obtained through eating foods and taking dietary supplements. But, interestingly, for the average person, only about 45 nutrients are considered vital for human growth, development and maintenance. These vital nutrients can be classed into six different groups: fats, carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, minerals and water. Ideally, our diets should supply us with all of the nutrients we require. But most diets fall short, and gaps in the diet can be filled with dietary supplementation when needed.

Fats and similar substances like cholesterol and phospholipids are referred to as lipids. They are important sources of energy, they provide structure in cell membranes, they transport fat-soluble vitamins, and they can be precursors for hormones. Types of fats categorized as omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids are essential and must be obtained from the diet. They play significant roles in cardiovascular health, mood and behavior; healthy inflammation response, and more. Omega-6 fatty acids are usually abundant in the diet; omega-3 fatty acids often need to be supplemented for optimal health. Products such as Super Omega-3 EPA (*Stock No. 1515-7*) and DHA (*Stock No. 1513-5*) contain beneficial amounts of omega-3 fatty acids. Flax Seed Oil Liquid (*Stock No. 3162-1*) provides both omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids.

Dietary carbohydrates come in the form of simple sugars, starches and fibers. They provide the major source of energy for the body. It is quite easy to obtain ample amounts of carbohydrates from the foods we eat, but choosing how much of each type to eat can significantly impact health and bodily function. Simple sugars are made of one or two sugar molecules that are easily digested and absorbed, and increase sugar levels in the blood quickly for fast energy. Berry Healthy Drink Mix (*Stock No. 3206-8*) and Recovery Drink Mix (*Stock No. 3662-2*) both contain the simple sugar fructose and are ideal for active or stressed individuals. Starches are chains of three or more sugar molecules that take longer to digest and absorb. This makes them ideal for sustained energy. Glyco Essentials (*Stock No. 876-5*) contains essential sugars that may improve cellular communications. These essential sugars are supplied by many sources, including rice starch. Fibers are non-digestible carbohydrates that may help promote bowel regularity, maintain already normal cholesterol levels and much more. Psyllium Hulls Combination (*Stock No. 1375-6*) and Everybody's Fiber (*Stock No. 1336-6*) each provide significant amounts of dietary fiber.

The word protein is derived from the Greek word *protos*, which translates to, "of prime importance." Individual amino acids can affect the body on their own, but when proteins are eaten, the amino acids that they provide combine with others produced in the body to make other functional compounds. Thousands of proteins in our bodies form structures, act as hormones and enzymes, provide

energy, form antibodies, balance fluids and pH, provide nitrogen and sulfur, and transport substances. NSP products that provide excellent sources of protein include Nutri-Burn Chocolate (*Stock No. 3204-5*), Nutri-Burn Vanilla (*Stock No. 3208-1*) and SynerProTein (*Stock No. 3025-0*). Free Amino Acids (*Stock No. 3664-6*) also provides a good source of protein in a convenient tablet.

Vitamins and minerals constitute a major portion of vital nutrients. They have a diverse range of functions in the body. These nutrients are needed in small amounts compared to fats, carbohydrates and proteins, and are referred to as micronutrients as opposed to macronutrients. A varied diet consisting primarily of unprocessed foods is expected to provide sufficient quantities of essential vitamins and minerals. However, this ideal diet is not often practiced.

Supplemental vitamins and minerals are a wise choice for those interested in maintaining good health. With a selection of Super Supplemental Vitamins & Minerals (*Stock No. 1792-7*) (also available without iron *Stock No. 1809-0*); Multiple Vitamins & Minerals, SynerPro® (*Stock No. 1644-1*); Multiple Vitamins & Minerals, Time Release Tablets (*Stock No. 1619-5*); VitaWave Liquid Vitamins & Minerals (*Stock No. 3332-3*); Nature's Prenatal, Multiple Vitamins & Minerals (*Stock No. 4917-8*); and Herbasaur's Multiple Vitamins & Minerals Chewable Tablets (*Stock No. 1593-0*), it should be easy to find the right products to suit the needs of virtually anyone.

If you look at which nutrients you can do without for the shortest amounts of time, you might conclude that water is the most vital of all nutrients. Our bodies are made up of approximately 60 percent water. Transporting nutrients and wastes, controlling body temperature, lubricating joints and aiding in digestive processes are but a few functions water performs in the body. Most guidelines recommend eight to 10 glasses of water per day, in addition to the water obtained from foods and other beverages. Nature's Sunshine Products offers many products such as Ultimate GreenZone (*Stock No. 1103-6*), RG-Max (*Stock No. 587-4*), and Vita Lemon Drink Mix (*Stock No. 2932-7*) that are mixed with water, to add extra nutrition to daily water intake.

While it is essential to ensure that you consume adequate amounts of vital nutrients, it is also important not to stop there. Many other substances found in foods provide health benefits beyond those of basic nutrition. Numerous plant nutrients, or phytonutrients, have been identified as having possible actions in helping to maintain wellness. Many of these nutrients can be found in products offered by Nature's Sunshine and nicely complement a diet and supplementation program containing vital nutrients.

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