

FOR MEN AND WOMEN

optimyz



2013 YOUR
**BEST
YEAR
EVER**

K₂ IS YOUR BODY
MISSING THIS
MIRACLE VITAMIN?

PRO WORKOUT
HALF HOUR TO POWER

OUCH! SOLVING
THE PUZZLE OF PAIN

JAN/FEB 2013 VOL. 5 NO. 6

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF GOODLIFE FITNESS



Should everyone take multivitamins?

BY DR. JULIE T. CHEN, M.D.

Dr. Julie, I am 35 years old and I've heard that taking multivitamins every day isn't a good idea. I eat a lot of vegetables at every meal. Should I stop my multivitamin since I generally feel well and don't have active health issues?

NOWADAYS, it seems that everywhere you turn, you see in the news that multivitamins may not be so good for you and you wonder where that information is coming from. Even though I am a huge fan of vitamins, I do have to agree with the notion that multivitamins are not always a great idea if you eat a lot of vegetables and fruits.

If you have a diet that is plant-heavy, then taking a multivitamin every day is over-kill and may be causing more harm than good. You should be getting your basic vitamins and minerals from your foods. For my patients who eat a lot of various types of vegetables and fruits and nuts, essentially eating the way Mother Nature intended us to eat, I don't prescribe them a multivitamin because it might be too much. The problem is that many people do not eat enough fruit and vegetables.

Our body is made in a way where too much or too little is not good. So when you already eat a diet rich in nutrients from plants and nuts, if you take a multivitamin every day you might be getting too much of a specific nutrient. When you have an excess of some vitamins, the excess acts pro-oxidatively and does more damage than good.

For patients who are young who eat a lot of vegetables, nuts, and fruits, I usually

do not recommend a multivitamin unless there is an absorption issue or the labs show deficiency. For those who eat well but are older, I would recommend a natural blend multivitamin as a gap filler only a few days per week to make sure that what you are not absorbing from your foods, you are getting through your vitamin. The reason for this is that as we get older, we naturally absorb less of what we eat compared.

While it is helpful for some patients to have nutrient testing, if that is not an option, my general take on multivitamins is that they should be used as a gap-filler in patients who do not absorb as well. But in general, the world's best multivitamin is really Mother Nature's garden. Thus, we should eat our basic greens—as well as the reds, purples, yellows, and oranges.

A plant-heavy diet affords many benefits, including increased fibre for intestinal health, heart disease prevention, glowing skin and cancer prevention. It also provides all the fundamental building block nutrients that our body needs for organ functioning and health, without the concerns of overdosing and harming ourselves as potential over-dosing on vitamins might cause.

Studies show that eating a mostly anti-inflammatory diet that is plant-based leads



PHOTOGRAPHY: PEPPI18

to overall less inflammation and helps with many chronic diseases like cancers, chronic pain, autoimmune diseases, allergies, heart disease, and even mood disorders as well, to name a few.

As we round out the holidays and start the New Year heading towards Spring, you should focus on making an effort to eat fresh produce. One benefit of these modern times is that you should be able to have access to some healthy organic produce year round. This way, with vegetables firmly in place on your plate at every meal, you can use these natural multivitamins to keep your body healthy early in 2013 and keep your body healthy all the way into the next year. **Z**

Dr. Julie T. Chen, MD, is an integrative medicine physician with her own practice in San Jose, CA. Check out her website at makinghealthy.com.