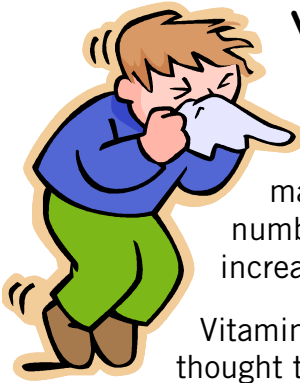


VITAMIN C—Not the Cold Protection Vitamin



Vitamin C does not prevent/cure the common cold or its symptoms. This conclusion has been formulated after many, many studies. There is some research that indicates that a very small number of individuals have a reduction in the cold's duration with increased Vitamin C intake.

Vitamin C, also called Ascorbic Acid, may not help with a cold. But it is thought to be a very beneficial nutrient. It is necessary for the growth, development, and repair of body tissues. It is involved in the immune system, collagen formation, maintenance of cartilage, bones and teeth, iron absorption, and wound healing. It is an antioxidant that protects our cells from damage from substances called free radicals. Free radicals can build up in our bodies and contribute to the development of health conditions such as heart disease and arthritis.

Vitamin C is not stored in our body. We need to replenish our bodies with Vitamin C daily. The recommended Vitamin C amount for individuals over 51 years old is:

- Females: 75 mg
- Males: 90 mg

Some research indicates that an additional 35 mg is needed for smokers. The meals from Meals on Wheels provide over 1/3 of the recommended amount.

When amounts over 200 mg are consumed, the body excretes the excess in the urine. There is a maximum safe level, which is called the “tolerable upper intake level”. This level is 2000 mg. Amount over this can cause stomach upset, diarrhea and kidney stones. **As with all supplements, tell your physician that you are taking extra Vitamin C because it can interact with medications and functions within the body.** Severe Vitamin C deficiency can cause a disease called Scurvy, which must be treated under a physician's supervision.

The best sources of Vitamin C are food. Dietary sources of Vitamin C are:

- Citrus items: oranges & orange juice, grapefruit & grapefruit juice, tangerines, lemons, limes
- Other fruit: Strawberries, cantaloupe, papaya, and kiwi
- Tomatoes
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Brussels sprouts
- Potatoes: White & sweet potatoes
- Peppers: Green & red peppers

Direct sunlight and heat (cooking) can reduce the Vitamin C levels in food. Fresh and uncooked fruits and vegetables have the most Vitamin C. Overcooked vegetables and very ripe fruit have less amounts of Vitamin C.