

Why You Can't Depend on Food Alone for Essential Nutrition

Listed below are **22 reasons why you cannot depend on food alone to provide you with all of the nutrition you need to stay healthy.**

Reason #1. Overfed and undernourished. The average American is overfed and undernourished. It's no secret. Just look around you. Most people are gaining weight. Even kids are overweight these days. You or someone you know has a chronic disorder of some kind.

If you're like most Americans, you're consuming fabricated convenience foods high in calories but low in food value (nutrition). This type of diet leads to "subclinical" or marginal deficiencies that lead to vague health complaints such as nervousness, listlessness, recurring minor infections, general aches and pains, difficulty concentrating, irritability, depression, muscle weakness, fatigue, insomnia, and just not feeling right.

A large body of research has demonstrated that most Americans are not getting what they need from their diet. For example, in one recent U.S. Dept. of Agriculture survey of 20,000 people, not a single person was consuming adequate levels of all the vitamins and minerals. In this study, the percentage of Americans were found to be deficient as follows: 90% in vit. B6, 75% in magnesium, 68% in calcium, 57% in iron, 50% in vitamin A, 45% in vitamin B1, 41% in vitamin C, 34% in vitamin B2, 34% in vitamin B12....and the list goes on.

There are literally hundreds of medical studies to suggest it's a virtual certainty that you and every member of your family are deficient in one or more essential nutrients.

Reason #2. Soil depletion. Modern mass-production agriculture depletes nutrients from the soil without replenishing them. The application of synthetic fertilizers stimulates the growth of beautiful-looking plants. However, the nutrient content is missing.

So when you bite into that healthy salad or slice of whole-wheat bread, you're getting less nutrition today than from the identical foods grown in the same soil fifty years ago.

Reason #3. Commercial food processing. Much of the food you eat is processed in one way or another. When foods are processed, they are exposed to heat, light, oxygen, or drastic change in temperature or humidity. This exposure causes the destruction of vital but fragile nutrients. Examples of processing include baking, extruding, milling, grinding, boiling, cooking, recombining, spray-drying, etc.

Reason #4: Food storage and transportation. All foods deteriorate as they age. This is a problem for the food industry, because many foods are shipped over great distances. Therefore chemicals are added to preserve foods and give them a longer "shelf life". Unfortunately, in spite of chemicals, the nutrient content of foods decline over time, even though they may look the same.

Even fresh fruits or vegetables may be sprayed, gassed or fumigated in order to make them look "ripe" and "fresh". So what looks healthy isn't necessarily as healthy as you may think.

Reason #5: Preparation and cooking of foods. Many people eat out or bring something home from the market that is already cooked. Even if you prepare your meals at home, most of your food is probably cooked, not raw. Here's the problem: the more you cook a food, the less its nutrient value.

Of course, there are some foods, such as grains and dried legumes that you have to cook because they're inedible when raw. You're obviously not going to eat a bowl of raw rice. However, if you overcook rice, you lose nutrients.

Reason #6: Home storage of food. Have you looked in your refrigerator lately? How long has that head of lettuce been in there? What about those leftovers from three days ago? Refrigeration does slow down the deterioration of food, but it certainly does not stop it. As every day goes by, whatever is in your refrigerator is losing its nutritional value.

Some people will eat something out of the refrigerator that is three weeks old, or something from the pantry that is a year old. By this time, some vital nutrients have been completely lost.

Reason #7. Food irradiation. Exposing foods to gamma rays, x-rays or other radiation extends their shelf life by destruction of microorganisms, inhibition of sprouting, and delay of ripening. Some meats, chicken, and vegetables are irradiated. Foods served in restaurants or schools may be irradiated. The problem with irradiation is that vital nutrients, especially antioxidants and fat-soluble vitamins, are destroyed. There's no label to tell you if a food has been irradiated.

Reason #8. Pesticides in foods. A pesticide is a poison. A little bit of pesticide will kill a bug. A lot of pesticide will kill you. Most foods contain pesticides. Even organic produce contains pesticides, although a lot less than regular produce. Pesticides may be applied to the soil, to the growing plant, or to the food while in storage or shipment.

Keep in mind that you can't see, smell or taste these pesticides. So you have no way of knowing if what you're eating contains pest poisons. But your body knows. Some pesticides can accumulate in the body and cause problems. Your body has to deal with the problem by expending valuable vitamins and minerals to detoxify and try to eliminate these poisons.

Reason #9. Genetically modified foods. Millions of acres of genetically modified corn, cotton and potatoes have been planted in the U.S. (Cotton is mentioned here because cottonseed oil is found in many processed foods, and cottonseed meal is fed to cattle.) These foods, which are now in our food supply, have been engineered to produce a naturally occurring pesticide that is supposedly toxic only to insects. There are no long-term human studies to indicate that genetically modified foods are safe. However, rats fed genetically modified potatoes had increased intestinal infections, reduced immunity, and reduced weight of intestine, pancreas, kidneys, liver, lungs and brain. Since you may be unknowingly consuming genetically modified or irradiated foods, you would need dietary supplementation to offset the invisible but potentially negative effects of such foods.

Reason #10. Environmental pollution. We dump nearly six billion pounds of chemicals into our environment every year. While some of it ends up in our food, much of it is in our air and water. If you breathe air and drink water, you are ingesting chemical pollution. Medical research has clearly established that environmental chemicals contribute to degenerative diseases.

You have no choice but to eat food, drink water, and breathe air. Therefore, you will need dietary supplements to help you process and detoxify the pollution entering your body every day.

Reason #11. Bioaccumulation of pollution in animal foods. There are certain "persistent" pollutants that tend to accumulate in any living thing, whether animal or plant. The higher up the food chain, the greater the accumulation. Take swordfish for example. Swordfish is known to have high levels of mercury, a toxic metal.

The problem starts when small bait fish eat organic material that contains mercury. They metabolize the organic material but retain the mercury. Small predatory fish then eat the bait fish, thus inheriting their accumulated mercury. The more bait fish they eat, the more mercury they accumulate. Finally a swordfish comes along and eats a bunch of small predatory fish, and picks up a load of mercury. So a big swordfish can gather a lot of mercury over time. But the swordfish is not the end of the chain. You are! You eat the swordfish, and now all that accumulated mercury is stored in "your" body.

Swordfish is only one example out of hundreds. Here's the point. You're at the top of the entire food chain on earth. Therefore, you unknowingly accumulate heavy metals and chemical pollutants, which are proven

to be detrimental to your health. If you consume animal foods, you need dietary supplements to help you handle the pollutants they contain.

Reason #12. "Energy" pollution. Energy pollution invisibly burdens your body. The form of energy pollution you're familiar with is radioactive fallout, like that from nuclear testing in Nevada which caused an increase in cancers downwind from the test site. Another, less well known form of energy pollution is altered magnetic fields from electrical motors and circuits, and all kinds of energy transmissions (microwave, radar, cell phone, etc.). Not only can energy pollution destroy or damage cells directly, but it causes a stress reaction in the body which leads to hormonal imbalances. For example, energy pollution reduces your levels of melatonin, an essential hormone. Once again, dietary supplements are a method to assist your body to compensate for another type of pollution from which there is no escape.

Reason #13: Genetic weaknesses. Each of us is genetically and biochemically unique. But none of us is perfect. We all have some kind of genetic weakness. For example, you might have a genetic abnormality in methionine metabolism called homocystinuria (methionine is an amino acid required to make your body function). In this case, taking large doses of vitamin B6 is a way to compensate for this weakness. There are hundreds if not thousands of possible genetic abnormalities. Many of them can be minimized with dietary supplementation.

Reason #14. Chronic Stress. "Stress" occurs when your body has a "fight or flight" response to any situation. Most of the time, you're not aware of it. Stress can come from anywhere at any time. It could be a barking dog, a disagreeable boss, a car that needs repair, an unpaid bill, a relationship that isn't working, or living alone. Anything at all. You become so accustomed to stress that you consciously tune it out – but your body doesn't.

When stress is repeated over and over, it is called chronic stress, which seriously depletes your body of energy and vital reserves. Chronic stress produces hormones that have a long-term weakening effect on your body which accelerates the aging process and leads to chronic degenerative disease. Supplements reduce the detrimental effects of chronic stress.

Reason #15. Your lifestyle. How you behave may increase your need for supplementation. For example, smoking or drinking alcohol to excess dramatically saps your reserves of vital nutrients. In both cases, dietary supplementation is not an option - it's a requirement.

On the other hand, if you're an avid mountain climber or high-performance athlete, you use up nutrients faster than the average person. The same is true if you work in a physically demanding occupation. Your performance will be improved with dietary supplementation.

Reason #16: GI problems. Any kind of digestive or gastrointestinal problem will diminish your absorption of vitamins, minerals, protein, essential fats, and plant substances required to maintain a healthy body. Irritable bowel syndrome, colitis, Crohn's disease, or chronic diarrhea hurt your ability to absorb nutrients. Ditto for bacterial, viral, yeast or parasitic infections. Food allergies are notorious for causing GI problems. In short, any inflammation in your GI tract means trouble. Therefore, you will need supplements to help you deal with the inflammation, as well as to increase the amount of essential nutrients you are consuming and absorbing.

Reason #17: Weak digestion. Heartburn, bloat after eating, burping, or gas may suggest you have an impaired ability to digest your food. If you can't digest your food, it can't be absorbed into your body. Supplementary digestive aids may be indicated.

Reason #18: Getting older. Medical studies have proven that you lose your digestive power as you get older. By the time you're "elderly", you have a serious problem that can only be corrected by supplementation.

In addition, studies have shown that many elderly people eat less well than they did in earlier years. In this case, dietary supplements can augment an otherwise inadequate diet.

Reason #19: Teenager. It's no secret that adolescents eat and drink things that are very unhealthy, i.e., "junk food". This is no way to nourish a maturing body. Most teenagers need dietary supplementation.

Reason #20. Chronic disease or disorder. It doesn't matter what the disorder is. It could be arthritis, macular degeneration, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, eczema, PMS or anything else. Specific dietary supplements can help almost any disorder.

Reason #21. Medications. Americans consume an astounding quantity of prescription and over-the-counter medications. However, nothing in your body operates in isolated compartments - everything interacts with everything else in some way. Many drugs interact with supplements, or cause an increased need for them. For example, women on birth control pills may have an increased need for vitamin B6. People on Glucophage need more calcium, B12 and folic acid. The list is endless. So if you're on medication, consult with one of our physicians to determine the specific supplements you need.

Reason #22. Pregnancy. Your requirement for nutrients undergoes a big shift when you become pregnant. It's to your and your baby's benefit to take supplementation to reduce your risk of a miscarriage or pregnancy complications, and to have a healthier baby.

BOTTOM LINE: Because of worldwide pollution and degradation in the quality of our food supply, it's hard to imagine anyone who will not need nutritional supplements for the rest of his or her life. In addition, many people have health problems, a lifestyle, or special situations where supplements are advisable.

Reference website: <http://www.connecticutcenterforhealth.com/supplements-health.html>