

Whole Food Nutrition Vs. Synthetic Vitamins

- by David Sandoval

Here's the issue with nutritional bars, meal replacements, and even with the vast majority of nutritional supplements: Sure, they're packed chock full of lots of vitamins and minerals, sometimes in doses well above the RDA. But these micronutrients are isolated, lab-created, synthetic versions of the real thing as they occur in food.

In super whole foods, nutrients exist within complex combinations of enzymes and other activating and synergistic elements. Those foods, when they replace processed foods in our diets, can change our very physiology at its deepest, cellular level. The trace elements, enzymes and cofactors present in whole foods actually make the "nutrient" or antioxidant work! They "activate the elements."

I am entirely convinced that this is the reason why research studies on multivitamin/mineral supplements or antioxidant supplements for preventing or ameliorating disease have not had more resoundingly impressive results. Research that has compared nutrient-dense diets with less nutrient dense diets, where there's a lot more micronutrient punch per calorie, has been far more encouraging.

Mother Nature never puts vitamin C or vitamin E or magnesium or calcium into a food all by itself. Your body didn't evolve to get its nutrition that way. Daniel H. Chong, N.D., puts it very eloquently. He stated that the equivalent of creating the average modern multivitamin is trying to create a working automobile by going to the junkyard, finding the parts, and tossing them all together in a heap! If you're accustomed to thinking of nutrient supplement quality only in terms of the dosage, with higher dosages of individual nutrients being a better value, it's time to shift your thinking. A whole food-based nutrient supplement can deliver more than adequate nutritional punch with lower doses because of improved bioavailability and synergy between the various nutrients. You want the world's healthiest foods, concentrated, not megadoses of isolated vitamins, minerals, and whatever other nutrients or phytochemicals happen to be trendy right now, all tossed into a formula willy-nilly.

So, here are a few examples of whole food nutrient sources that you can look for in your nutritional supplements.

Rice Bran Solubles: A Whole Food Source of B Vitamins & Vitamin E

Rice is a staple food for millions upon millions of people. Most of those who rely on rice for sustenance eat the polished white version—an unfortunate choice, because the bran that is removed from the rice's exterior to make it white is the home of about 65 percent of its nutritive value. Rice bran solubles are a supplement ingredient incredibly rich in vitamin E (alpha-tocopherol) and related compounds called tocotrienols. Tocotrienols have up to 100 times more antioxidant potency than vitamin E alone, and they usually exist naturally alongside vitamin E in good food sources of this nutrient. Research from the University of Massachusetts and other U.S. universities, as well as overseas in China and India, has found that rice bran oil has hypolipidemic effects: in other words, it reduces "bad" LDL cholesterol and enhances levels of "good" HDL cholesterol. The mechanism for this effect isn't yet understood, but it is believed that tocotrienols and a phytochemical called gamma-oryzanol, which usually naturally occurs with tocotrienols, are responsible for this benefit.

All in all, vitamin E from Rice Bran Solubles not isolated from it, but administered in the company of the many other substances that naturally occur along with it is the new gold standard for optimal vitamin E nutrition. And as if that weren't enough, rice bran also happens to be a spectacular source of B vitamins.

Spirulina: Nature's Best Source of Carotenes & Essential Fats

The fact that fossils of spirulina algae have been dated back to a time that precedes the dinosaurs, and that it is basically the same today as it was then, speaks volumes about its essential role in the earthly food chain. It turns out that spirulina is nature's most perfect nutrient source.

This alga is rich in a wide spectrum of nutrients, including micronutrients (vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals) and macronutrients (fat, protein, carbohydrate). Spirulina's cell walls are made from polysaccharides that are easily broken down by acids and enzymes in the GI tract, and its nutrients are highly absorbable and bioavailable to the human body. Spirulina is about 60 percent protein and contains a balanced array of amino acids; it is rich in the anti-inflammatory fatty acid, gamma-linoleic acid; and contains a wide spectrum of highly bioavailable vitamins, antioxidants, carotenes, and

Okay Mom, there you are, staring at the endless supply of nutrients available on the vitamin aisle. "Take our vitamin C to boost your immune system," says one sign. Another touts the potency of vitamin E, telling you to "Do your heart right," and still another claims to have over 20 times the RDA of beta-carotene, "the antioxidant power of 10 pounds of carrots." Or so they say. But science has another story to tell, and it is one that many people in the vitamin industry do not want to hear. Evidence suggests that synthetic, manmade nutrients, in mega-dose form, can actually hurt your body, creating the harmful free radicals that "antioxidants" are supposed to help fight! Recent studies show that by isolating or concentrating these nutrients, we actually change the way the body reacts to them and the results can be far worse than the benefit. Today many scientists, nutritionists, and educated consumers are rejecting multivitamins and other "fortified" foods and embracing the benefits of phytonutrients as the most powerful tool to bring health to your body.

minerals. It is particularly rich in carotenes (aka carotenoids), including beta-carotene. Within this spiral-shaped alga, these powerful antioxidants are complexed with accessory nutrients, including complementary antioxidants, creating a balance not found in supplements that contain only isolated beta-carotene.

Spirulina has been found to improve immune parameters and improve resistance to herpes virus, influenza, and even the HIV virus. Unique to spirulina are its phycocyanins, blue-green pigments that boost immunity against infection, reduce inflammation, and may even help to prevent cancer. In healthy people, spirulina enhances energy, alertness, and endurance.

Amla: Your Best Source of Vitamin C

Megadosing with straight synthetic ascorbic acid (vitamin C) has been trendy in the world of nutrition for a long time. This drug-like indication for vitamin C might help to fight off a cold or the flu, because of the vitamin's accelerating effects on immune function; but high doses of isolated C over long periods can be dehydrating and can create imbalances between it and other antioxidants, creating deficiencies of minerals and co-nutrients. In the end, there can be a pro-oxidant effect—exactly what we don't want. For every day, it's better to use a whole food source of vitamin C to maintain balanced nutrition and great, vibrant health.

The fruit of the gooseberry tree is used to make an ancient Ayurvedic medicine called amla. Amla happens to contain extremely high concentrations of vitamin C, 16 times that found in oranges and the bioflavonoids required for its efficient absorption. It is complexed in a way that makes it alkaline instead of acidic, which aids in better absorption in

the GI tract and relieves the body of having to buffer all that acid—a job that can end up pulling precious minerals from bone.

Ayurvedic physicians have long used amla to treat colds, yeast infections, bleeding gums, diabetes, and asthma—even cancer. Laboratory studies have found that this extract has power against bacteria, viruses, and fungi, and that it promotes the liver's cleansing function and increases its production of antioxidant enzymes.

In Conclusion...

It's obvious to me that no individual nutrient in a food can have as profound an effect on the body as the combinations created by the evolutionary process. Hopefully, the research community will catch onto this, and they'll stop giving people just plain vitamin E or vitamin C or beta-carotene and then saying that the vitamins were ineffective. That's throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

If these studies had used highly nutrient-dense "superfood" nutrient concentrates that include the natural synergistic elements found in the world's most nutritious foods, these subjects would most likely have done far better in every measurement of health and well-being. For now, for yourself and your family, keep this in mind when you shop for nutritional supplements, and try to seek out whole food concentrates instead of isolated, lab-created jumbles of vitamins and minerals.

References available at
www.freedompressonline.com.

RESOURCES

If you are looking for the highest quality whole food supplements, we recommend PHP products wholeheartedly. David Sandoval has created a company that has pioneered certified organic ingredients and some of the best-tasting pure green barley and kamut grass juices that we think rival the quality of fresh wheatgrass available at juice bars. PHP products are available nationwide from health food stores & natural health centers.

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