



“Vitamin Supplementation Urged”

The National Academy of Sciences has recommended vitamins for large segments of the population. Stating that even those who eat a well-balanced diet may not receive all the dietary nutrients from food alone, they cited this example: A woman would have to consume a whole loaf of bread to meet the daily recommendation for folate. Acknowledging that scientific evidence supports the use of supplements, the recommendations are a part of an overhaul of the dietary reference intakes.

These new recommendations included updated specifications on:

- Vitamin B12—Genetic material built from this complex. Accordingly, a lack may cause anemia and nerve cell damage. In addition, for Americans 51 and older, vitamin supplements are also urged for consumption of vitamin B12. Anemia is caused by the lack of absorption of vitamin B12 from food, and this affects 10 percent to 30 percent of older Americans.
- Folic acid—Needed to create DNA, RNA and red blood cells. A lack may contribute to neural tube defects and spina bifida. Women are urged by the Public Health Service to consume more than 400 micrograms of the vitamin per day.
- Vitamin B6—Needed for protein and carbohydrate metabolism. A lack may contribute to decreased nerve function.

These recommendations serve as the basis for a healthy diet. Although there has been a bias in the past against taking supplements because experts have been afraid that supplementation will create an excuse to eat poorly, however, the Academy further states that they know vitamin supplements work and why should chances be taken when you are talking about birth defects.

REFERENCE: “Vitamin Recommendations Expanded”, *Washington Post*

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