



## The scoop on supplements

There is so much information in the news. If you were taking all the supplements recommended, you would be taking 50 pills a day. What should you really take?

First off, we need to settle the big debate: If I eat right, why do I need a supplement?

Most of America does not get the recommended daily intake of fruits, vegetables, protein and fiber. Even if we did eat the recommended quantity and eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, the quality of our food is just not what it used to be.

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In the older and much wiser days, we used to rotate crops and provide our produce with nutrient rich soil so that the plant was nutrient dense. These days, our plants are not rotated and stay in nutrient depleted ground. They are being sprayed with

chemicals and just not as powerfully packed with vitamins and minerals as they once were. Our bodies need those vitamins and minerals, which leads us to the answer of yes, everyone should supplement.

That leads to the second most asked question: What should I take? I recommend that all of my patients start on what I call the essential daily four-pack.

A quality multivitamin will cover many of the things that a body is lacking. It will give you the basic building blocks that your body needs daily. This will cover most of the basic vitamins including vitamin A, most of the B vitamins, vitamin C, vitamin D3, vitamin E, calcium, magnesium and so on.

Just as your truck needs fuel to run, your body needs the building blocks to perform the simplest functions. Without B vitamins, you may feel tired. Without antioxidants, such as vitamins C and E, your immune system will not function properly and you may find yourself getting sick.

The next in my essential daily four pack is a quality vitamin D3.

Not all vitamin D is created equal. Vitamin D2 is not as absorbable as

vitamin D3. D3 is normally animal based, and the body can absorb it much more readily. Why do we need it? D3 is essential for bones, the immune system and the nervous system. Studies have shown that it facilitates hormone regulation and is linked to mood problems, including depression, anxiety and insomnia. It helps manage blood sugar and can help diabetes prevention. D3 also plays a role in the cardiovascular system and helps fight heart disease. It has even been correlated to protect against some cancers.

Although we do get vitamin D from the sun the most recent studies have shown that 90 percent of Americans with darker skin are deficient in vitamin D as well as 70 percent of lighter skinned Americans. This might be the most deficient vitamin for Americans. The best way to find out what your vitamin D levels are is to ask your doctor to check your vitamin D blood levels.

The third supplement in my essential daily four pack is magnesium.

Magnesium is a mineral that is vital for all of us. It helps regulate calcium, sodium and potassium. Many of the

drivers out there are not replenishing their electrolytes every time they sweat and over time become magnesium deficient.

Overall, there are some studies that say up to 80 percent of people



are deficient in magnesium (mg).

Magnesium has been found to be in more than 300 functions in the body and is vital in digestion, musculoskeletal and nervous systems. There are also medications that decrease the magnesium absorption. Muscle aches and pains can be a sign that you are magnesium deficient. Fibromyalgia and migraines have been treated with magnesium supplementation. If you have chronic constipation this can also be as simple as adding a magnesium supplement to maintain regularity. Not only does magnesium relax your muscles and your GI (gastrointestinal) tract but it will relax your mind and can decrease anxiety and decrease your blood pressure.

The last vital supplement in my essential daily four pack is fish oil. The omega-3 fatty acids are vital for anti-inflammatory and health promoting function.

Most Americans don't get enough omega-3 fatty acids and have too many omega-6 fatty acids. This leads to inflammatory diseases. Example of inflammatory diseases are arthritis, ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease, hepatitis, heart disease, any of the autoimmune disorders, such as systemic lupus and multiple sclerosis.

Diabetes is also an inflammatory state, so adding fish oil to your daily routine will help combat bad fats and pro-inflammatory foods.

Many patients would never know that although they are overweight that they are actually malnourished. Until you feed that body the nutrients it needs, it won't matter how many diet pills and energy pills you take. The body will not be adequately equipped to lose weight or feel great. Ask your doctor before making any change in your health care, but get on the road to good health with this essential daily four pack and give your body the

tools it needs to be healthy.

Lastly, it's always the best practice to talk with your doctor or a dietitian about nutritional supplements. Don't forget to ask about potential side effects and any interactions they may have with medications you take. **LL**



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*This column is the opinion of the writer and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Land Line Magazine or its publisher. Please remember everyone's health situation is different. If you have questions regarding medical issues, consult your personal physician.*



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