

VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTS

The data supporting vitamin supplement use to prevent or treat eye disease is inconclusive. Nonetheless, some general recommendations need to be made.

The best source of vitamins is fresh fruit and vegetables. Five to ten servings of spinach, carrots, tomatoes, and oranges each day may be optimal but for most people is impractical. In choosing a supplement, keep the following in mind:

1. Most vitamin supplements are NOT regulated by the F.D.A., and you need to be a wise consumer. Examine your supplements carefully.
2. Your supplement should adhere to the U.S.P. standards for dissolvability, and this should be printed on the label. If not, many such supplements pass right through without giving any benefit.
3. Capsules are probably better than chewable tablets, which are probably better than non-chewable tablets.
4. More is not necessarily better. Excess zinc can cause absorption problems and cardiac complications. Too much vitamin A is associated with birth defects in pregnant women, and high doses of vitamin D may affect bone metabolism. On the other hand, federal recommended daily allowances (RDA) may be too low.
5. "One-a-day" vitamins may be inadequate, as water-soluble vitamins such as C and B-complex pass through your system within 12 hours.
6. Here are some daily doses you may wish to consider:
 - i. Vitamin E: (in its natural form, not the dl-alpha synthetic form) 400 IU
 - ii. Vitamin C: 1,000 - 2,000 mg
 - iii. GBE: (Ginkgo Biloba Leaf Extract) 100 - 200 mg
 - iv. Lutein: 2.5 mg - 5.0 mg
 - v. Omega-3 fish oils: (containing docosahexanoic acid, DHA) 120 - 2,000 mg
 - vi. Amino acid chelates: present
 - vii. Beta Carotene: 5,000 IU
7. If you have liver disease or drink alcohol regularly, you may consider decreasing the amount of vitamin A and beta carotene in your supplements.