

NHI Philosophy: Benefits and Safety of Dietary Supplements

A substantial body of research indicates a nourishing diet is essential for Optimal Health. Such a diet includes balance (adequate amounts of all macronutrients), variety (multiple food sources), and an emphasis on plant foods. In addition to a nourishing diet, supplementation helps fill potential nutrient gaps due to an inadequate diet and provides higher level of nutrients that may be difficult to get from food.

Even with the best of intentions, it is difficult to always eat a healthy balanced diet for Optimal Health. Supplementation serves to help bridge any potential nutrient gaps. The Nutrilite Health Institute (NHI) recommends that all adults consume a daily multivitamin and mineral supplement. This recommendation is based on an extensive review of the scientific literature and is meant to ensure that everyone consumes at least the minimum recommended nutrient level to maintain health.^{1,2} Additionally, there is strong evidence to support taking dietary supplements for specific health benefits including:

- Calcium and vitamin D for optimal bone health^{3,4}
- Folic acid to reduce neural tube defects^{5,6}
- Folic acid^{7,8,9} and omega 3 fatty acids¹⁰ for heart health
- Lutein and other antioxidant nutrients for eye^{11,12,13} and general health^{14,15,16}

Dietary supplementation can not be expected to overcome the negative effects of an unhealthy lifestyle. Rather, dietary supplementation complements a healthy lifestyle and provides additional nutritional insurance that one is doing all they can to achieve Optimal Health.

Research on the effects and mechanisms of action of nutritional interventions, including supplementation, is evolving. As such, the media is constantly reporting both positive and negative studies. Recently, several reviews and meta-analyses (a review of previous research studies in which they are combined and additional conclusions may be derived) have been published about the safety of dietary supplements, in particular, antioxidants, including vitamins. It must be noted that while each publication is unique, it does not necessarily represent new research. Some of these reviews provide a balanced perspective and recommend that one consult with their health care provider to ensure their supplementation regime is appropriate. The NHI

agrees with this recommendation, particularly for people with health conditions that require medical care.

Others however, may present a less balanced view or can be easily misconstrued in media coverage. They may even include questionable scientific methodology. The fact that many of these reviews are found in reputable publications such as *JAMA* and *The Cochrane Review* further adds to the confusion. The Council for Responsible Nutrition has published several press releases and study analyses that demonstrate the associated methodological challenges. These assessments can be accessed at: http://www.crnusa.org/press_prs.html.

The NHI promotes a balanced, healthy lifestyle that includes proper dietary supplementation. NUTRILITE™ supplements are formulated based upon the latest available science and are thoroughly reviewed by our in-house toxicologists to ensure they are safe when used as directed and fall within any established upper limit of safety. NHI scientists continually review the latest research to ensure that NUTRILITE supplements remain both safe and effective for our consumers.

References

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