

News You Can Use

The vast importance of vitamin C

All animal species manufacture vitamin C in their bodies. All except man. The generally accepted theory of why man does not synthesis his own vitamin C is because of a mutation tens of millions of years ago. The disabling of this process was due to the to the lack of need to do so – diet was an abundant source of Vitamin C so self-manufacture was not necessary.

Vitamin C or ascorbic acid is the core of antioxidant defense in air exposed life on the planet. Our bodies do not manufacture it. We don't store vitamin C very well but we use it constantly and yet we don't get very much from our diets anymore.

The reason for the lack of available vitamin C from the diet, and the lack of most necessary vitamins and minerals from our food sources is because of where our food comes from today. Throughout the world there has been a severe depletion of adequate nutrition in our agricultural soils and therefore the necessary nutrients are not contained in the harvested food.

As one example:

Amounts of Vitamin C in 100 g of Spinach

1950 = 150 mg

1963 = 100 mg

1982 = 063 mg

1994 = 013 mg

50% of our planet's topsoil has been destroyed over the last 50 years through the overuse of inorganic fertilizers, erosion and farming practices that deplete nutrients in the soil. In a US Senate document (246) in 1936 it was stated "The alarming fact is that food – fruits, vegetables, and grains – now being raised on millions of acres of land that no longer contains enough of certain needed nutrients, are starving us no matter how much we eat of them." It has gotten much worse since 1936. The population of the world in 1920 was 2 billion people. 40 years later it was 3 billion in 1960. In 1975 – 4 billion. 5 billion in 1987 and 6 billion in 2000. And so it goes.

In order to maintain health, humans need vitamins and minerals, which are critical for the proper functioning of us, as organisms. According to the USDA, Americans are lacking in the minerals calcium, magnesium, potassium and the vitamins A, C, D, and E. Research has shown that people develop chronic health problems without needed vitamins and minerals. Many of today's most prevalent diseases are linked to nutritional deficiencies. Most of us suffer from mineral or vitamin deficiencies. Even a depletion of a trace mineral can cause fatigue, interfere in an ability to concentrate, or allow aches and pains to surface. When stressed emotionally or physically, the body gobbles up vitamins, more quickly (especially vitamins B and C) and other micronutrients.

Vitamin C, a water-soluble vitamin and the most unstable, is easily destroyed by oxygen, alkalis, and high temperature. On average cooking destroys 50% or more of the vitamin C. On the positive side, fermentation and germination significantly increase vitamin C.

Vitamin C is responsible for the formation of collagen, which forms skin, ligaments, cartilage, vertebral discs, joint linings, capillary walls, and bones and teeth. It is important in healing wounds and fractures. It plays an important role in serotonin production and norepinephrine (chemical substances that occur naturally in the body and play an important role in the emotional wellness of an individual). Vitamin C is required to break down cholesterol to bile acid. It helps the body resist infections through the white blood cells.

Vitamin C is essential for normal functions of the body:

***Helps the body absorb iron and calcium**

***A natural antihistamine and therefore helps with allergies and asthma**

***Reduces risk of heart disease up to 40% - treats hypertension and high cholesterol**

***Reduces cancer risk**

***A powerful antioxidant**

***Reduces risk for cataracts**

***Increases resistance to ligament and tendon injuries**

***Can help protect from radiation (x-rays)**

***Can protect against arthritis or prevent symptoms**

Vitamin C deficiency is more common than previously believed; vitamin C deficiency studies show that one in seven young adults in Canada are deficient in vitamin C. A deficiency in vitamin C impairs collagen formation and slows healing of bone fractures. Supporting blood vessels, a deficiency is reflected in bleeding gums, and capillaries spontaneously breaking under the skin. Adults may feel weak, tired and irritable. One might lose weight and have slightly aching muscles and joints. Hair may appear dry and brittle and skin may start to look scaly and feel dry and rough. Infections become more prevalent. Wounds won't heal and anemia may be a problem.

Some drugs lower vitamin C levels, like estrogen-containing contraceptives, aspirin if taken frequently and possibly anti-coagulant (blood thinning) medications like Warfarin (Coumadin).

Newest studies find an explanation of how Vitamin C reacts to neutralize the toxic byproducts of fat metabolism. "This is a previously unrecognized function for vitamin C in the human body," said Fred Stevens, an assistant professor in the Linus Pauling Institute. "We knew that vitamin C is an antioxidant that can help neutralize free radicals. But the new discovery indicates it has a complex protective role against toxic compounds formed from oxidized lipids (which essentially are rancid fats), preventing the genetic damage or inflammation they can cause." Oxidation of lipids has been the focus of considerable research in recent years, the scientists say, not just for the role it may play in cancer but also in other chronic diseases such as heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, and autoimmune disorders.

A recent study published in *Seminars in Preventive and Alternative Medicine* that looked at over 100 studies over 10 years revealed a growing list of benefits of vitamin C. "Vitamin C has received a great deal of attention, and with good reason. Higher blood levels of vitamin C may be the ideal nutrition marker for overall health," says study researcher Mark Moyad, MD, MPH, of the University of Michigan. "But," Moyad notes, "the ideal dosage may be higher than the recommended dietary allowance." He suggests taking 500 milligrams a day, in addition to eating five servings of fruits and vegetables. He also notes that only 10% to 20% of adults get the recommended nine servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Vitamin C is one of the safest and most effective nutrients, experts say, but it's still important not to exceed the safe upper limit of 2,000 milligrams a day to avoid stomach upset.



NATURE'S SUNSHINE PRODUCTS offers several products that contain the proper amount and form of vitamin C for daily requirements or for a therapeutic increased dose. For example:
Vitamin C Citrus Bioflavonoids.

Benefits:

- Provides nutritional support to the immune system.
- Protects against free radical damage with its antioxidant abilities.
- Supports tissue development.
- Aids in collagen production.

Vitamin C, Citrus Bioflavonoids [Vital Nutrition] are nutritional compounds found together in nature. Bioflavonoids help protect the body from free radical damage.

They are combined in a unique base containing 50 mg each of lemon bioflavonoids, orange bioflavonoids, grapefruit bioflavonoids, hesperidin complex, rutin and rose hips extract.

One tablet contains 500 mg of vitamin C or 835 percent of the Daily Value. Contains no starch, sugar, artificial flavors or colors.

Yours in Good Health!

Sincerely,

Dr. Jack and Chris Ritchason
Back to Herbs Team

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