

Where do most people's diets fall short? Most of us get more than we need in terms of calories, refined carbohydrates, saturated fat and sodium. But we may be missing out on key nutrients! It turns out the five most glaring deficiencies are in potassium, vitamin E, magnesium, vitamin A and fiber.



**Potassium:** 99% of women and 90% of men fail to get adequate potassium (unless they are supplemented with it!) This shortfall may be contributing to increasing rates of high blood pressure. Potassium also plays a role in muscle contraction and in good bone health. Potassium is found in many different food groups including fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy and whole grains. In particular, potatoes (sweet is higher than white!), bananas, tomatoes, citrus fruits, kiwis, broccoli, apricots, winter squash and also in nuts and legumes. We just need to eat more of these foods to make sure we are getting the recommended level of potassium is 4700 mg daily (but more may be needed with strenuous exercise).

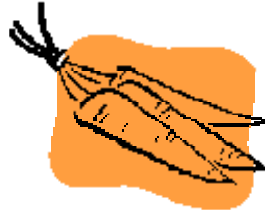


**Vitamin E:** 97% of women and 89% of men are deficient in this nutrient! Vitamin E is a fat soluble vitamin and a potent antioxidant that may slow the effects of aging and help bolster the immune system. Vitamin E may also play a role in fighting off heart disease and cancer by protecting against the effect of free radical damage. The food sources with the highest vitamin E content include plant oils, nuts and seeds (especially almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts and sunflower seeds), dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach and broccoli, mango, kiwi, red bell peppers and fortified cereals. The recommended amount is 15 mg daily.



**Magnesium:** 67% of women and 64% of men are deficient in this nutrient. Magnesium supports bone and heart health. It is needed for more than 300 biochemical reactions in the body and for proper nerve and muscle function. To get adequate magnesium intake, select a variety of foods including legumes, nuts, whole grains and vegetables. Specific foods include soy, oats, almonds,

cashews, Brazil nuts, shredded wheat, brown rice, spinach, potatoes and bananas. The recommended amount for adults over age 30 is 320 mg for females and 420 mg for males.



**Vitamin A:** 48% of women and 57% of men are deficient in this nutrient. Vitamin A is a fat soluble vitamin that promotes healthy skin, eyesight and immune function. Diets rich in vitamin A and carotenoids may lower the risk for cancer. In general, there are two categories of vitamin A, depending on whether the food source is an animal or a plant. Vitamin A found in foods that come from animals is called preformed vitamin A. Sources include whole eggs, liver, whole milk, and some fortified food products such as cereals. Vitamin A that is found in colorful fruits and vegetables is called provitamin A carotenoid. These are found in darkly colored fruits and vegetables such as pumpkin, sweet potatoes, winter squash, carrots, kale, cantaloupe, apricots, papaya, and peaches. Recommended amount for individuals over 19 years of age are 2310 International Units for women and 3000 International Units for men.



**Fiber:** Fiber isn't really a nutrient since we don't absorb it well but it is a key component of our diets. Dietary fiber is derived from the edible parts of plants that are not broken down by human digestive enzymes (it just passes on through!) Dietary fiber assists in maintaining bowel regularity, and maintaining normal cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Diets high in dietary fiber may play a role in the prevention and/or treatment of a number of health conditions including breast and colon cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, gall stones, and obesity. Good sources of dietary fiber include dried beans, peas and lentils, fresh berries, oats, dark greens including turnip greens, mustard greens and collard greens and broccoli, cauliflower, celery, green peas, cabbage, barley, kiwi and apples. The Adequate Intake level for individuals 19 to 50 years of age is 38 grams for males and 25 grams for females. 50% of both men and women are lacking adequate dietary fiber in their diets.

Other neglected nutrients would include:

**Vitamin C** -add colored peppers, citrus, kiwi, sweet and white potatoes, strawberries, and broccoli to your eating

**Calcium** -add low fat dairy, soy and dark greens

**Zinc** -add oysters, beans, oats, red meat poultry, nuts and green peas

**Vitamin B6**-add potatoes, bananas, fortified cereals, beans, meat, fish, poultry, red bell peppers and broccoli

**Phosphorus**-add lentils, fish, dairy foods, meat, sardines, salmon, nuts and Portobello mushrooms

All of these nutrients help to maintain your health so you may want to note some of the foods you enjoy or might be willing to try and add them to your shopping list!

We may get some cooler and rainy weather this weekend so perhaps you'd like to make a pot of soup or a stew (see if you can include some of the above nutrient providing foods!) Here are a few websites to peruse for some ideas

<http://allrecipes.com/directory/4631.asp> Check out the African Sweet Potato and Peanut Soup recipe!

<http://southernfood.about.com/library/recipes/blpage6.htm>

[http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/recipes/list\\_soupstew.html](http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/recipes/list_soupstew.html)

<http://homecooking.about.com/library/archive/blsoupindx.htm>

A big pot could last for several meals or could provide some of your work day lunches as well.

For those concerned about whether they do indeed meet their nutritional needs, how about a consultation with a dietetic student or myself? We can help you in finding easy ways to improve your eating that may decrease your health risks and improve your daily energy! As an employee you have 3 visits each year as part of your benefit package! Please let me know if you are interested! (call 4-9625 or respond to this e-mail)

Enjoy your weekend—rain or shine!

Go Cyclones!!

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