



**Multivitamins**      **By Annie Stuart**

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What's one of the best—and cheapest—insurance policies you can buy? Well, some experts consider it the bottle of multivitamins that sits on your kitchen table.

Vitamins are substances that your body needs to grow and function the right way, ones your body can't produce by itself. Not everyone agrees a multivitamin is necessary for all people. After all, if your diet is well balanced, you can get many of the vitamins you need from food. But a multivitamin may still be smart, no matter how much organic produce or whole grains you eat. Growing evidence indicates that several vitamins can help ward off serious diseases, such as cancer, osteoporosis, and heart disease. Plus, it is really hard to get the right amounts of some vitamins through diet. For example, you'd need to eat eight servings of fruits or four to six servings of vegetables daily to get the required amount of folic acid. This is an essential nutrient that's been shown to lower the risk of birth defects and colon cancer.

A multivitamin is even more important in cases like these:

- You are pregnant or trying to become pregnant.
- You're aging or have another condition making it harder to absorb nutrients.
- You have an illness that is depleting your body's nutrients.
- You're a strict vegetarian.
- You are on a restricted diet.

I can guide you in selecting a multivitamin that's right for you. First, I'd check to see if you have any allergies to vitamins and whether a multivitamin might interact poorly with any of your medications. Here are a couple of general guidelines to follow. Know that a store-brand multivitamin is just as good as a name brand—and cheaper, too. But steer clear of super-cheap multivitamins in close-out or dollar stores. A Consumer Report test showed that nearly half failed to contain the labeled amount of at least one nutrient or they failed to dissolve properly.

Pick a multivitamin with no more than 100 percent of the vitamins needed daily. Too much of a good thing *can* be harmful. But know that you may need extra of certain vitamins, such as vitamin D, especially as you age. I'd be glad to guide you on this.

What is included in a one-a-day multivitamin? Available in tablets, chewables, capsules, or liquids, multivitamins usually include the following:

- Vitamin D, which helps build bones and lowers risk of colorectal cancer
- Vitamin A, which aids the immune system and regulates cell growth. (Too much vitamin A may raise the risk of bone fractures.)
- Carotenoids, which may help prevent cancer
- Vitamins B6, B12, and E, which may help with heart health
- Vitamin K, which helps with blood clotting and building bone.

Many multivitamins also include minerals such as calcium or iron. How much you need also depends on your age and health.<sup>1</sup> Ask me any questions you have.

Remember: Don't use your multivitamin as a crutch or an excuse to eat junk food. There's no real substitute for eating healthy food. It offers unique advantages, such as fiber and other compounds that may help prevent disease.



If you have any questions please feel free to contact me @ 873-3244 or [mcglynnrx@tds.net](mailto:mcglynnrx@tds.net)

Thanks, Dan McGlynn