



Nutrition and supplements

Read the following article about vitamin and mineral supplements.

Is it true what they say about nutritional gaps?

1 Dietary supplements, mainly vitamins and minerals, but these days including a wide array of other plant-based pills and concoctions, have been around for more than 40 years.

5 In this article, our team at *Eat Sensibly* will examine how necessary it is to supplement your daily intake of food with such chemical add-ons. We will argue that if you eat a healthy, balanced diet, you do not need to 'feed' your

10 body with anything else.

Almost all nutrition experts agree that a balanced and nutritious diet is the best way to obtain nutrients. A diet which balances carbohydrates, fats and protein, staying within the parameters set by health experts globally, is quite easy to do after all. For example, the average woman should be eating approximately 150 grams of carbohydrate per day, 45 grams of protein and about 55 grams of fat. It's not rocket science and, with so much fresh food available these days, we estimate that 80% of the world's population has access to convenient, cheap and healthy food.

25 Some biochemists argue that millions of people in the 21st century have micronutrient inadequacies and that it's therefore sensible to provide a daily supplement that can restore these nutritional gaps safely. This is a rather startling statement. It doesn't help when so-called scientists provide evidence in this way.

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We don't deny that vitamins and minerals support the normal functioning of the body and can help lower the risk of getting chronic diseases, such as diabetes. We've seen decades

of quality-driven research into nutrition and diet... but the intention was not to create a massive, global industry which produces unneeded supplements. Wouldn't that money be much better spent on health education programmes – on making us all more aware of what a balanced diet actually is, satisfying all of our nutritional needs?



Comments:

Leila: Reality is that the vast majority of people in wealthy countries eat unhealthily and therefore lack vitamins and minerals.

Jack: I know for a fact that 93% of unemployed adults don't get the recommended requirement of vitamins D and E from their diet.

Maria: I read on the World Health Organization website that 650,000 children under five years suffer from deficiency in Vitamin A – easy to solve with a chewy tablet.

Raf: Why do you think we hardly ever see serious problems with bone calcium levels nowadays?

Understanding

Answer the following questions.

1. How much protein intake is advised for an average woman per day?
2. Why do some biochemists argue that supplements are a good idea?
3. The writers of the article accept that vitamins and minerals are necessary, but what do they object to?
4. The article argues that in most cases dietary supplements are not necessary. How does the tone of the posts (replies) differ?
5. Do you think the writers have a convincing argument? Why, or why not?
6. You are the editor at *Eat Sensibly* and you have been asked to reply to each of the posts. What would you say to each of the four posts?



Word builder

Answer the following questions.

1. Which three words in the Word cloud were chosen specifically to convey the writer's views and argument?
2. Why do you think *array* was used instead of *variety*?
3. Would you say *parameters* is meant as a positive or negative idea?
4. Fill in the gaps below with alternative words to those in brackets, keeping the same idea.

Millions of people in the 21st century have micronutrient _____ (gaps) and therefore it's sensible to provide a daily supplement that can _____ (restore) these nutritional gaps _____ (safely).

Developing your language – managing your paragraphs

The second, third and fourth paragraphs in the article have strong topic sentences (underlined in the article). Answer the following questions.

1. In your own words, what is the main idea in each of these three paragraphs?
2. The paragraphs are constructed to present an argument – and this has been done well – but what other language devices have the writers used?
3. Write a fifth paragraph, of about 80 words, starting with the topic sentence: *And there's another dimension to consider...*

Glossary

chronic disease a disease that is long-term and cannot be cured by medicine or prevented by a vaccine

supplements pills, powders or liquids added to a person's diet and taken orally

Word cloud

array parameters
concoctions startling
inadequacies unneeded

Remember

A topic sentence is used at the beginning of a paragraph to introduce the main idea within it. It usually summarises the main thoughts in the paragraph.