

Essential Vitamins & Minerals

Your child needs only small amounts of these, but they do a big job. Without them, food can't be changed into energy, and your child won't grow properly.

FAT SOLUBLE Vitamins and Minerals	Used For	Best Sources
Vitamin A	Bone growth, night and color vision, healthy skin, cell repair	Dairy products, yellow-orange fruits and vegetables, leafy greens
Vitamin D	Calcium and phosphorus absorption; bone growth	Fortified milk, butter, eggs
Vitamin E	Growth, healthy skin and muscles, red blood cells	Vegetable oils, whole grain breads, wheat germ, nuts, sweet potatoes
Vitamin K	Blood clotting, bone development	Green leafy vegetables, cabbage, cauliflower, peas, potatoes

B-Vitamins and Minerals	Used For	Best Sources
Vitamins B1 (Thiamine), B2 (Riboflavin), and B3 (Niacin)	Energy from carbohydrates, healthy nervous system and skin, daytime vision	Whole or enriched grains, dairy products, eggs, meat, fish, beans, nuts, leafy greens, tomatoes, potatoes, dark green vegetables
Vitamin B6	Formation of red blood cells, breakdown and absorption of protein	Whole grains, meat, poultry, fish, leafy greens, bananas, avocados
Vitamin B12	Formation of red blood cells, healthy nervous system	Meat, dairy products, fish, eggs

MISCELLANEOUS Vitamins and Minerals	Used For	Best Sources
Vitamin C	Gums, teeth, and bones; wound healing; infection resistance; iron absorption	Citrus fruits, cabbage, green peppers, tomatoes, potatoes
Folic Acid	Formation of red blood cells	Dark green leafy vegetables, wheat germ, dairy products, beans
Calcium	Bones and teeth, nerves and muscles	Dairy products, nuts, beans, dark green leafy vegetables, salmon
Iodine	Thyroid regulation	Sea salt, iodized salt
Iron	Formation of hemoglobin, muscle development, resistance to infection	Red meat, eggs, dried fruit, beans, whole or enriched grains and cereals, potatoes
Magnesium	Bone growth, temperature regulation, nerves	Whole grains, nuts, dark green leafy vegetables, bananas
Phosphorus	Bone growth	Meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, eggs, beans, whole grains, peas, lentils
Zinc	Immune system, growth and development	Meat, poultry, eggs, fish, liver

Fiber – the Fabulous Fat Fighter

Switching to a high-fiber diet can be like taking a magic weight loss pill. But how exactly does fiber work?

- It's filling. It swells a little in the stomach, quelling hunger. So, a 100-calorie portion of a bran cereal will make you feel a lot fuller than a 100-calorie portion of a corn cereal.
- It lowers blood sugar. Many high-fiber foods (think oatmeal) help moderate your blood sugar level and keep your insulin level low. Low insulin has been linked to lower body fat and lower risk of diabetes.
- It flushes out fat. Some types of fiber, particularly those in fruits and vegetables, can sweep our fat before the body absorbs it.
- It's low in calories. Pure fiber itself has virtually no calories. Your body can't break it down so it runs right through your digestive system, providing only bulk.

High Fiber Foods: fruits, vegetables, legumes, bran's, breads, cereals, pasta, and starchy foods made with whole grains.

Potassium Packed Produce

You've probably heard that too much sodium can raise blood pressure, but have you heard that potassium can lower it? Potassium may also reduce kidney stone risk and age-related bone loss. Fruits and vegetables are the best sources because their potassium is more easily absorbed by the body than the potassium in milk, meat, and grains.

Pick up potassium in:

- Bananas and plantains
- Beans (black, kidney, white, etc.)
- Cantaloupe and honeydew melons
- Cooked greens
- Oranges and orange juice
- Soybeans, both green (edamame) and mature
- Sweet potatoes
- Tomato sauce, paste, and puree
- White potatoes
- Winter squash

Can You Spot the Whole Grain?

Whole grain foods are healthy for you because they contain more fiber and nutrients. But food labels and ingredients lists can be deceiving. Here's how to tell if you're buying the real thing:

It's whole grain if it's called:

- Brown rice
- Buckwheat
- Bulgur or cracked wheat
- Millet
- Quinoa
- Sorghum
- Triticale
- Wheat berries
- Whole grain barley or pearled barley
- Whole-grain corn
- Whole oats or oatmeal
- Whole rye
- Whole spelt
- Whole wheat
- Wild rice

It's not whole grain if it's called:

- Corn flour
- Cornmeal
- Degerminated cornmeal
- Enriched flour
- Multigrain
- Pumpernickel
- Rice
- Rice flour
- Rye flour or rye
- Stone ground wheat
- Wheat
- Wheat flour
- Wheat germ
- Unbleached wheat flour

Tip: Look at where the whole grain falls in the ingredients list. Foods are listed in order of weight, starting with the heaviest. If a whole grain is the only grain listed, that's great. But often you'll see wheat flour (white flour) as the first ingredient, followed by some sort of sweetener, then whole wheat flour. This means there might be just a trace amount.

Berry, Berry Nutritious

Many breakfast and snack recipes call for berries. Here's why:

- Blueberries have powerful antioxidant compounds that may improve memory and coordination
- Raspberries are loaded with 4 grams of fiber per half cup, and they boast high levels of antioxidants (although not the stratospheric levels found in blueberries)
- Strawberries are rich in ellagic acid, a cancer fighter. One half cup provides 57% of your daily requirement for vitamin C
- Blackberries are rich in a compound that helps fight cancer and inflammation and may also reduce the risk of heart disease. They're also a great source of fiber.
- Elderberries, black currants, and chokeberries are still scarce in the marketplace but that may change as consumers learn about their high antioxidant content – they may have 50% higher antioxidant levels than the common berries!

The Skinny on Fats

All fats are not created equal – only certain kinds are linked to heart disease, inflammation, and other ills.

Look for:

- MONOUNSATURATED FAT:
 - Olive oil, canola oil, avocados, almonds, peanuts, cashews

- POLYUNSATURATED FAT:
 - Omega-6s found in: corn oil, soybean oil, safflower oil, sunflower oil
 - Omega-3s found in: bluefish, herring, salmon, sardines, trout, flaxseed oil, walnuts, wheat germ, edamame, canola oil. Omega-3s ease arthritis symptoms and help reduce the risk of heart disease and depression

Try to avoid:

- SATURATED FAT
 - Found in: butter, chicken skin, coconut oil, cottonseed oil, palm oil, fatty meat. While you can't eliminate saturated fat from your diet – small amounts are found in oils rich in healthy fats such as olive oil – you can cut back

- TRANS FAT
 - Found in: cookies, piecrusts, snack foods, crackers, breadings, products with *partially hydrogenated oils* or *shortening* on the label. Trans fats are made by a hydrogenation process that converts oils into firmer fats like margarine. Trans fat is worse than saturated fat because not only does it raise levels of LDL ('bad' cholesterol), but it lowers levels of HDL ('good' cholesterol). The good news: the government is requiring manufacturers to list trans fat amounts on labels, and companies are removing the fat as a result.