

WHAT'S MISSING FROM YOUR DIET?

BY MICHELLE GIBEALT TRAUB

You could be at risk for nutritional deficiencies. Surprising, isn't it? In spite of our country's vast food supply, studies indicate that many Americans have trouble meeting their nutritional needs. Our busy lifestyles often lead us to processed and packaged foods that are not as nutritionally balanced as the fruits, vegetables and other whole foods we know we should be eating. And with new research pointing to higher recommendations, some nutrients have become especially difficult to get in the average diet.

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NUTRIENTS AMERICANS NEED NOW

Nutrient	Why is it a concern?	How to get more
Calcium	About 44 million Americans are at risk for osteoporosis (porous bones). Calcium is a vital nutrient in preventing that disease and ensuring optimal bone health, as well as healthy muscle contraction.	Add low-fat dairy products, fortified orange juice, collard greens and calcium supplements.
Vitamin D	In addition to assisting calcium with bone health, vitamin D plays a role in preventing numerous diseases. Yet researchers estimate that the majority of the population is deficient. Elderly individuals and those living in northern states are particularly at risk since their bodies are not able to efficiently make D from sun exposure.	Eat more fatty fish, fortified dairy products, and vitamin D3 supplements. Get 15 minutes of sun per day. * If you believe you may be deficient, request a blood test from your physician.
Omega-3 fatty acids	Omega-3 fats have been shown to decrease inflammation in the body, benefiting heart and joint health. However, fish is the main source of omega-3 fats, and many people are not eating fish because of worries over mercury and PCBs.	Consume wild salmon, flaxseed, walnuts, hempseed or omega-3 fatty acid supplements (EPA & DHA).
Magnesium	Magnesium is involved in more than 300 processes in the body, including a supporting role in bone health and nerve function. While deficiency symptoms are rarely a problem, studies indicate that people are not meeting their magnesium needs. This is likely due to food processing, which strips many foods of their magnesium.	Choose whole grains, beans, nuts, fish and green leafy vegetables. * Avoid processed foods made with white flour.
Water	Every cell in the body needs water to function properly. However, our thirst mechanism diminishes with age, and we tend to quench our thirst with calorie-laden, sugary drinks. This can result in dehydration, fatigue, confusion and weight gain.	Fill a pitcher every morning with filtered water and aim to drink at least four to eight cups of water per day. Add lemon or fruit slices to make it more enjoyable.

*Always consult with a trusted physician or dietitian before taking a dietary supplement or starting a new nutrition plan.

Coping with loss

People facing a loss – whether the death of a loved one, a divorce, or the loss of their health – experience a range of feelings that may include denial, anger, shock, and depression or hopelessness. These reactions are normal and part of the grieving process, which experts say can last from several weeks to a few years.

The American Academy of Family Physicians offers these suggestions for coping with loss:

- Talk with others about how you're feeling.
- Get back into your daily routine and keep up with daily tasks as much as you can so you don't become overwhelmed.
- Get adequate sleep, eat a balanced diet, exercise regularly, and avoid alcohol, which can make depression worse.
- Put off major decisions until you're feeling better.
- Let yourself grieve in your own way.
- Ask for help from your family, friends, doctor, clergyman or a counselor if you need it.

