



Dear Dr. Hoo,

I am confused about supplementation; I always thought it was best to get my nutrients from food instead of a vitamin supplement. Can you comment?

Getting your micronutrients through food is ideal, however, if we approach this issue realistically, many of us do not have sound nutritional habits; we don't always eat whole organically grown or free range foods, nor do we eat foods that are prepared in such a way so as to retain its nutritional value. As such, a daily multivitamin/mineral supplement is a very good place to start.

Micronutrients are vitamins, minerals, and other compounds that your body needs in small amounts in order to accomplish certain functions such as regulating your metabolism or detoxification. Micronutrients also talk to our genes, signaling them to turn on or off, which can mean all the difference between our chances of developing a chronic disease like diabetes or not. Micronutrition works system-wide at a cellular level, generally upstream of the pathways targeted by pharmaceutical drugs.

In other words, you might be able to get by without micronutritional supplements, but when they're missing, the mechanisms for developing disease can be set in motion. The emerging study of how nutrients talk to our genes to prevent or induce these diseases is known as *nutrigenomics*. This is the underlying concept for why it's so important for us to get the vitamins and minerals our bodies need every day!

When it comes to vitamins and supplements, however, it is best to speak with a clinician who understands nutrition and who can make the appropriate recommendations based on your healthcare needs, helping you to design and implement a dietary and supplementation regime that speaks best to your own health goals, medical history, lifestyle, and genetic make-up.

As always, a healthy diet with plenty water, rest and moderate exercise should be maintained along with nutritional supplementation. If you would like support in assessing your health status, please consult with your healthcare provider to ensure that your healthcare goals are addressed or call us for further information.

Dr. Aaron Hoo

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