

Nutrition Essentials for Women

While most women and girls can get recommended vitamins and minerals by eating healthy, others may need a supplement to meet nutrient requirements.

Nutrition for Girls During Puberty

- ✔ **Calcium:** Builds and maintains strong bones and teeth
- ✔ **Iron:** Important for muscle development, lean body mass and menstruation

During puberty, calcium and iron requirements are fairly easy to meet through a diet rich in meat and dairy products.

Nutrition for Reproductive Age Women

- ✔ **Calcium:** For bone development during pregnancy
- ✔ **Choline:** For cell membrane development
- ✔ **Folic Acid / Folate:** Helps prevent pregnancy complications
- ✔ **Iron:** To prevent anemia — common during pregnancy
- ✔ **Omega-3s:** Can help baby's brain development, prevent preterm birth
- ✔ **Vitamin D:** Helps absorb calcium

Even when doing their best to eat healthy, many women can still experience nutritional deficiencies during pregnancy. OB/GYNs will prescribe necessary supplements.

Nutrition for Women During Menopause

- ✔ **B12:** Helps prevent fatigue, lack of energy
- ✔ **Calcium & Vitamin D:** Helps prevent bone loss in older age
- ✔ **Fluids:** Helps prevent dehydration, urinary tract infections

As we get older, our thirst decreases, which can impact fluid intake. Supplements may be necessary if meal intake decreases.

Bridging the Diet Gap:

Choosing Vitamins and Supplements

- ✔ Choose brands labeled with the NSF International, US Pharmacopeia, Underwriters Laboratory, or Consumer Lab seal. These verify the product actually contains the ingredients on the label — and doesn't contain any potentially harmful ingredients.
- ✔ Be wary of supplements that claim they will "cure" a disease. Any supplement that sounds too good to be true likely is.
- ✔ Remember, supplements are not regulated by the FDA the same way that drugs are.
- ✔ Supplements from outside the U.S. may not be regulated at all and may contain toxic ingredients.
- ✔ Calcium may affect iron absorption, so it's important to take these supplements at different times of the day.
- ✔ **Always consult with your doctor before starting a new vitamin or supplement regimen.**

Information provided by

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