

Normal diet not defined

Special to the News

Dear Dr. Meinig:

Having read your articles for years, I know that you have said it was a good idea to take a multiple vitamin.

Somehow I keep feeling that anybody on a good, balanced diet shouldn't need to do this.

Would you go over it again?

— T.U.

Dear T.U.:

As an introduction to your question, may I quote a couple of paragraphs from a publication that makes a good start in answering this dilemma?

"Life was great when I was in Mrs. Robert's fifth grade class.

"I squinted a bit to read what she put on the blackboard, but I had never known anything else. I never thought about my vision until I was told that I had to get glasses.

"I didn't see the need for them but when I put on my first pair, suddenly the world around me came into focus. The difference glasses made in my vision astonished me. That is why it is important to . . . TAKE A FRESH LOOK . . . you may think of your health the way I thought of my eyesight."

You feel run down sometimes, but doesn't everybody?

You get along just fine without paying attention to the specific nutrients your diet provides.

Is your body really getting all the nutrients it requires?

Research has shown that this isn't so. In fact, a study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Consumption Survey, found not a single person of some 21,000 received 100 percent of the recommended minimum daily require-

ments for all of the 10 nutrients included in the study.

It may surprise you, but the most common shortages were the vitamins A, C, and B complex, along with calcium and iron.

I have reported my experiences having patients fill out computer forms on which they list everything they ate and drank for one week. The printouts show the amounts of protein, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals present in the foods consumed. Not a single patient of mine ever met all the recommended minimum daily requirements.

The other difficulty involved concerns your statement that you follow a good, balanced diet.

I don't question that you thoroughly believe you do, but so do the vast majority of people I talk to. The problem with that statement is in understanding what it means.

No nutritional group, no doctor, nor any medical organization has ever defined what a so-called "normal diet" consists of.

Everyone . . . patients and doctors alike, all think they know what is meant by a normal diet, but for each, it is their own opinion.

George
Meinig, DDS



This is another example of how patients and doctors know not that they know not.

Although we now have a magnificent choice in the number of fresh foods available in our supermarkets, we must face the fact that most of them are picked green and allowed to ripen in transit on the grocer's shelf, or in your home.

This deprecates food nutrient values as does the continual mining of minerals from the soil that takes place during the growing of food.

Yes, farmers put some back, but not near what is absorbed into the produce they grow.

Then, too, some soils have known innate deficiencies.

For example, Ojal soils, like many areas of the country, have deficiencies of zinc.

Today, corn grown in Iowa and Illinois averages 3.3 grams of protein; 50 years ago it had 7 to 9 grams.

An additional problem is the loss of food nutrient value that occurs due to cooking.

It is for these various reasons that most of us involved in the nutrition field think it wise for people to take a multiple vitamin/mineral supplement.

While this is a guess as to the amounts needed, the chances are much greater that too little, that is, undernutrition will still be involved rather than overnutrition.

It seems to me most of us can stand more nutrients rather than less.

There are all kinds of multiple vitamins and minerals on the market. Two that I have found most people like and do well with are Nutri-Homo and one called Super 1 Daily by Carlson Laboratories.

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