

# nutrition chart: vitamins

Fat-Soluble Vitamins (Remain in the body.)

VITAMINS	ACTIONS	FOOD SOURCES	RDA	NOTES
<b>A</b> The five carotenoids below are converted into vitamin A in the body.	Antioxidant needed for eye and skin health and immunity; may help fight cancer.	Whole milk, fish liver oil, brightly colored fruits/vegetables.	2,300 IU for women; 3,000 IU for men	Unless a known deficiency exists, pregnant women and older adults should not exceed the RDA. ■ Corticosteroids, statins, and oral contraceptives interfere with A. <b>Contraindications:</b> Prescription forms of vitamin A; possibly chemotherapy.
<b>ASTAXANTHIN</b>	Fights cancer and free radicals.	Not available in significant amounts from the diet.	n/a	May prevent aging of the arteries, brain, and eyes.
<b>BETA CAROTENE</b>	Aids in cancer prevention.	Green, yellow, and orange fruits/vegetables.	n/a	Look for <b>natural</b> beta carotene in supplements.
<b>LUTEIN</b>	Protects against eye disorders, particularly macular degeneration.	Green fruits/vegetables, especially leafy greens.	n/a	Use with zeaxanthin.
<b>LYCOPENE</b>	May reduce risk of cancer, heart disease, and more.	Tomatoes cooked in oil, watermelon.	n/a	Higher doses may prevent male infertility.
<b>ZEAXANTHIN</b>	Antioxidant necessary for eye health.	Yellow corn, mangoes, oranges, egg yolks.	n/a	Use with lutein.
<b>D</b>	Critical for bone and tooth health; helps prevent cancer and autoimmune diseases.	Cod liver oil, fatty fish, egg yolks, fortified dairy.	600 IU	Take with calcium and magnesium; some recommend raising upper levels. Get some sun (10-15 mins.) daily. ■ Corticosteroids, diuretics, and some heartburn medicines may interfere with vitamin D.
<b>E</b> (d-alpha tocopherol and vitamin E succinate)	Antioxidant that may protect against Alzheimer's, cancer, and heart disease.	Wheat germ, almonds and other nuts, cold-pressed vegetable oils.	22.4 IU	Avoid synthetic E (dl-alpha tocopherol). ■ AZT and insulin from animal sources can interfere with E. <b>Contraindications:</b> Vitamin E increases the effect of blood-thinning agents (e.g., aspirin, anticoagulants).
<b>K</b>	Helps with blood clotting and bone formation and repair.	Leafy green vegetables, green tea, alfalfa.	90 micrograms for women; 120 micrograms for men	Antibiotics, corticosteroids, and anticonvulsants reduce vitamin K levels. <b>Contraindications:</b> High-dose vitamin K may oppose the action of anticoagulants.
<b>B1</b> (thiamine)	Enhances brain function and energy.	Brown rice, dairy, egg yolks, legumes, soy.	1.1 mg for women; 1.2 mg for men	Exercise, refined foods, and stress increase need. ■ Reduced by tricyclic antidepressants and oral contraceptives.
<b>B2</b> (riboflavin)	Essential to energy and immune support.	Cheese, eggs, fish, poultry, spinach, yogurt.	1.1 mg for women; 1.3 mg for men	Elderly need more of this vitamin. ■ Antibiotics, oral contraceptives, and tricyclic antidepressants reduce riboflavin.
<b>B3</b> (niacin)	Aids healthy circulation and nerves; lowers cholesterol.	Brewer's yeast, broccoli, carrots, eggs, fish, nuts, wheat germ.	14 mg for women; 16 mg for men	Flushing occurs with high doses; avoid time-release niacin. ■ Reduced by oral contraceptives, tricyclic antidepressants, and statins.
<b>B5</b> (pantothenic acid)	Fights stress; enhances stamina.	Whole wheat, eggs, legumes, peas.	5 mg	Lowers blood lipids; useful for lupus. ■ Reduced by tricyclic antidepressants.
<b>B6</b>	Needed for red blood cell metabolism and healthy immune function.	Bananas, brewer's yeast, brown rice, carrots, chicken, eggs, fish, oatmeal, whole-grain cereals.	1.3 mg	Useful for carpal tunnel, PMS, and during pregnancy and lactation. Avoid doses higher than 300 mg. ■ Antibiotics can reduce B6 levels.
<b>B9</b> <b>FOLIC ACID</b>	Important in genetic, metabolic, and nervous system health. Reduces risk of some birth defects.	Leafy greens, liver; also asparagus, brewer's yeast.	400 micrograms; 600 micrograms during pregnancy	May lower coronary risk; deficiency linked to dysplasia. ■ Aspirin, antacids, chemotherapy, lithium, and oral contraceptives may reduce folic acid.
<b>B12</b>	Needed for blood formation and nervous system health.	Kidneys and liver; also clams, crab, fish, eggs, dairy.	2.4 micrograms	Works synergistically with B6 and folic acid. ■ Reduced by antacids, tricyclic antidepressants, and oral contraceptives.
<b>BIOTIN</b>	Promotes healthy hair, nails, and skin.	Brewer's yeast, dairy, fish, meat, rice bran.	30 micrograms	Deficiency elevates blood sugar levels. ■ Anticonvulsants and insulin can reduce levels of biotin.
<b>CHOLINE</b> (not strictly water soluble)	Helps transmission of nerve impulses; supports brain function and fat metabolism.	Egg yolks, legumes, meat, whole grains.	425 mg for women; 550 mg for men	May be beneficial for people with arteriosclerosis and Parkinson's disease.
<b>INOSITOL</b>	Protects against hardening of the arteries.	Brewer's yeast, fruits/veggies, legumes, meat.	n/a	Useful for depression and panic disorder. ■ Caffeine may deplete levels.
<b>C</b> (ascorbic acid)	Antioxidant for immune, eye, and skin health.	Berries, citrus fruits, leafy greens.	75 mg for women; 90 mg for men	Acetaminophen, antibiotics, and oral contraceptives can interfere with vitamin C.

Water-Soluble Vitamins