



The Care Group, P.C.

The Keys to Appropriate Supplementation

By Gerard L. Guillory, M.D.

Americans spend more than \$17 billion a year on nutritional supplements, but few of us know what we are getting for our money.

Quality standards tend to be hit-or-miss among supplements manufacturers, and individual consumers don't always know what kinds and amounts of supplements they need. The kinds and amounts of supplements you take should be based on your individual health status and on your budgetary requirements.

Too often, I encounter patients who are spending large sums on supplements that they simply don't need or on supplements of low quality. Don't hesitate to seek advice from a healthcare practitioner who has training in nutrition.

In my experience, there are five nutritional supplements that nearly everyone should take. I would recommend that, in consultation with your physician, you consider daily intake of a multiple vitamin; an Omega-3 supplement; an anti-inflammatory agent called Zyflamend, which is made by New Mark, Inc. (a division of New Chapter, Inc.); a vitamin D supplement; and a probiotic supplement.

At www.shopthecaregroup.com, we offer all these supplements as well as other products. Our mission is to provide quality supplements, at affordable prices, from established and respected companies. As more of our patients use the products we recommend, we have the advantage of seeing which supplements seem to work and which don't. We are constantly searching for the best supplements for the best price.

In addition to the five supplements recommended here, each of us might need other supplements; however, individual needs vary with individual health problems, symptoms and other issues. Consulting with your physician is essential to your dealing effectively and safely with such questions.

That said, here are some additional thoughts about my five recommendations:

Multivitamin. Taking a daily therapeutic multivitamin is beneficial even for people who have a reasonably well-rounded diet. But which multivitamin you choose probably will depend on budgetary considerations as much as on other factors.

Keep in mind that there are three classes of vitamins. Synthetics, or vitamins manufactured through chemical processes in the lab, are the least expensive, but they may also tend to be the least effective, as they less readily absorbed. The second class of vitamins is derived from natural sources, often plants.

The best—and most expensive—class of vitamins consists of probiotic supplements, which contain minerals and vitamins that have been fermented, enabling the body to absorb the contents efficiently. These are the equivalent of nutrient-dense, fermented foods.

The fermentation process provides important health benefits. Have you ever wondered why yogurt is better for you than milk is, or why a glass of red wine has more health benefits than does the same quantity of grape juice? Fermentation not only transforms milk to yogurt and grape juice to red wine, but it also creates beneficial by-products; for example, red wine has considerably more of the potent anti-inflammatory/antioxidant resveratrol than does the grape juice from which the wine came.

The multivitamins offered by New Mark, Inc., are probiotic supplements and were developed using the standards of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program as a guideline.

“Most people would prefer to get their nutrients from food, and organic food if possible,” says New Chapter President Tom Newmark, whose comments appeared in a company statement. “So we've taken organic fruits and vegetables and fermented them with vitamins and minerals to bio-transform the nutrients into a whole food made with organic ingredients.”

Omega-3 fatty acids. Some nutrition experts say that one of the most serious problems with the American diet today is the paucity of Omega-3 fatty acids in our foods. A major reason Americans are consuming less of this important substance is that they are eating less wild fish and buying more farm-raised fish. They also tend to eat grain-fed beef, which is low in Omega-3 fatty acids, versus grass-fed beef, which is higher in Omega-3 fatty acids.

Two important Omega-3 fatty acids, called eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), are found in cold-water oily fish such as wild salmon, mackerel, herring, anchovies and sardines. Fish don't synthesize Omega-3 fatty acids; rather, they obtain them from the algae they eat. Farm-raised salmon are fed corn- and soy-based fish foods, which often are contaminated with herbicides and pesticides. Most of the salmon found in supermarkets and restaurants today is farm-raised "Atlantic salmon," which doesn't contain all the Omega-3 fatty acids you need.

Omega-3 deficiency has been associated with such issues as anxiety, depression, attention deficit disorder, cardiovascular problems and arthritis. Omega-3 fatty acids are very potent, natural anti-inflammatory agents.

I recommend an Omega-3 supplement made by Pharmax, LLC. The Pharmax supplement is derived from cold-water wild fish, sardines and anchovies that are naturally high in Omega-3 fatty acids. The Omega-3 fatty acids are naturally concentrated by Pharmax in a patented process.

In addition, Omega-3 fatty acids from Pharmax are molecularly distilled and exceed quality and purity standards established by The Council for Responsible Nutrition, the World Health Organization, and The European Pharmacopeia Standard. The United States hasn't established quality standards for fish oil.

Flaxseed is also an excellent dietary source of Omega-3 fatty acids and can be taken in addition to fish oil or in place of it by those who are vegetarian or who are allergic to fish. Flaxseed contains the Omega-3 fatty acid alpha-linolenic acid (ALA). Five to 15 percent of the ALA from flaxseed is converted to the more beneficial Omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA.

Zyflamend. Fighting chronic, excessive inflammation is essential to your health. Most of us need to pay particular attention to this because we suffer from at least some degree of chronic inflammation that arises as a result of poor diet, lack of exercise and ineffective responses to stress. The consequences can be severe.

Obesity and many age-related illnesses are linked to excessive, chronic cellular inflammation. Reducing chronic inflammation can help delay or even reverse the aging process. Engaging in regular exercise and managing stress more effectively are essential, as are dietary changes.

Zyflamend, an anti-inflammatory from New Mark, has become the top-selling anti-inflammatory herbal supplement in the United States. It is a patented formulation that includes proprietary extracts of spices and herbs that contain anti-inflammatory compounds. Ingredients include rosemary, turmeric, ginger, holy basil, green tea, hu zhang, Chinese goldthread, barberry, oregano, and Baikal skullcap.

Vitamin D. Another common deficiency in the American diet involves vitamin D; in fact, some medical experts are referring to this as an epidemic. Recent studies have linked vitamin D deficiency to a range of medical problems such as diabetes, chronic fatigue, osteoporosis, hypertension, multiple sclerosis, at least 16 types of cancer, and other diseases, including influenza.

Vitamin D is unlike other vitamins in that our bodies manufacture it when touched by sunlight. Yet many of us spend little time in the sun, especially in the winter and early spring. When warmer weather arrives, we apply sunscreen in order to prevent skin cancer. Without supplemental vitamin D, few of us are likely to get as much as we need.

The current recommended daily allowance for vitamin D, most experts say, is woefully inadequate. How much you should supplement is in debate. Your physician can easily check your vitamin D level and help you decide how much you should supplement.

Vitamin D supplements that are fat-emulsified are easier for the body to absorb. Absorption is especially efficient when the vitamin is delivered in sublingual drops, which are absorbed approximately three times better than are typical vitamin D tablets.

We recommend a product called Bio-D-Mulsion, a sublingual vitamin D drop offered by Biotics Research Corp.

Probiotics. Proper digestion and nutrition start in the gut. Unless you routinely consume fermented foods such as miso, you probably would benefit from daily intake of probiotics. These are living, beneficial bacteria that occur naturally in the human intestinal tract and that help block the invasion of disease-causing bacteria.

An easy way to understand how bacteria aid in digestion is to consider how yogurt is made. Add beneficial bacteria (usually lactobacilli) to milk, incubate for a few days at 90-something degrees, and you have yogurt. Take milk and leave it at that temperature for a few days, without the benefit of the beneficial bacteria, and you have sour milk.

If you don't have the right blend of bacteria in your gut, your body may be making the gastrointestinal equivalent of sour milk. Without the proper balance of good bacteria, your body is unable to ferment or optimally extract nutrients from your food. The lining of your intestinal tract may become damaged as a result, triggering a series of secondary problems.

A growing body of evidence suggests that probiotic supplements can help treat and prevent various forms of diarrhea, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, irritable bowel syndrome, small-bowel bacterial overgrowth, and lactose intolerance. Probiotics also may help prevent colon cancer.

We recommend a New Mark probiotic called GastroComplete, which promotes healthy bowel functioning and contains 10 beneficial probiotics cultured in organic soy with organic fruits, vegetables and herbs.

Gerard L. Guillory, M.D., is board-certified in internal medicine and has been practicing in Aurora, Colo., since July 1985. As an assistant clinical professor of medicine at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, Dr. Guillory is actively involved in teaching medical students, resident physicians, and nurse practitioner students. He has lectured extensively on the role of nutrition and disease. Over the years, he has fostered an interest in patient education and has authored three books on digestive troubles. He also has served as medical director of a Colorado-based health plan and as a health consultant to employer groups.