

Vitamins & Minerals

Have you seen people who got shorter as they aged? Do you remember the stories about sailors and scurvy where their gums would bleed? What about people who are anemic and get short of breath easily? All of these are examples that show the importance of vitamins and minerals.

Vitamins and minerals are important for our bodies. The cells in our bodies need vitamins and minerals to do their jobs correctly. Vitamins and minerals help with wound healing, healthy red blood cells, bone growth, blood clotting, breaking down food properly, and many more important actions. Remember the stories about sailors and scurvy where their gums would bleed? That was from a lack of Vitamin C since they had a steady diet of salted pork on ships with no fruits or vegetables.

Vitamin & mineral deficiencies can occur later in life. It is important to eat a wide variety of foods in order to get all your vitamins & minerals. Often, as we age, we start eating the same foods and limiting our variety. We like certain foods and ignore those we don't like. Losing teeth or developing acid reflux, intestinal problems, or other medical conditions can make eating some foods difficult or impossible. Cooking some foods can also get more difficult as time goes by.

To get all your vitamins and minerals, take these steps:

- ü Eat a wide variety of foods, including lots of fruits & vegetables.
- ü Take a multivitamin daily that is for your age group. Centrum Silver is one example.
- ü Talk to your doctor about whether you may be at risk for any vitamin/mineral deficiencies.
- ü Do not take vitamins or minerals individually unless approved by your doctor.
- ü Talk to your pharmacist to learn how your medications interact with vitamins and minerals. Your pharmacist can also help determine what you should and should not be taking.