

THE MYTH OF THE ONE-A-DAY MULTIVITAMIN

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So, you stopped believing in Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and a balanced budget; but you are strangely attracted to commercials suggesting that you can get your daily amount of vitamins in just one pill. Hey, who wouldn't want that? We are all busy and the attraction of one-stop-shopping and getting all your nutritional needs in one pill is alluring to us all.

But, despite what the fun and glitzy commercials are suggesting, **there are some serious flaws with the way that these one-a-days are manufactured.** They are far from meeting your nutritional needs, and there are much better ways to spend your money.

DO WE REALLY NEED TO TAKE PILLS?

The unfortunate answer to that question is, yes. The reasons why you need to supplement are many and are mostly the result of our modern society. Let's take a look at some of the reasons.

Most people would admit to being at least a little **stressed**, whether it is dealing with traffic, waiting on the phone for customer service, your job, or the kids. When we are under stress, we burn up nutrients, and replacing these nutrients is essential not only for handling future stress, but also for your health in general.

Chemicals in our environment also place a burden on your body. No matter how you try to avoid chemical exposure, you are being exposed. Whether it is the air you breathe, the water you drink, chemicals cleaners, pesticides, even many perfumes and other personal products contain harmful chemicals. In order to detoxify these chemicals, you need to make sure you are getting optimum nutrition. Your liver needs a variety of nutrients to rid your body of these chemicals.

To add to these problems, much of the **food you are eating is lacking in essential nutrients.** This is the result of growing food on the same land year after year and the processing of food.

Plants absorb nutrients around them and these nutrients end up in the food that you eat. Unless these nutrients are replaced by the farmer, they never make it into your food. Farmers typically only replace nutrients that encourage growth of the plant. These nutrients (potassium, nitrogen, and phosphorus) are important, but don't necessarily fulfill the complete nutritional needs of humans. Since most animals are also raised on grains grown on these fields, the nutrient deprivation continues on up to the person eating that animal.

The last reason to supplement comes from the fact that most people don't eat a balanced diet. Think about it, **when was the last time you ate really well throughout a whole day?**

The need to supplement is clear, the question becomes what do you want to be supplementing with? The answer to that question lies not in the one-a-day solution, but in an integrated approach to good baseline nutrition that gives you the best chance of warding off all types of illnesses and giving you the energy you want to enjoy your life.

LET'S TALK ABOUT PILLS

While it is obvious that one-a-day vitamins come in pills, let's take a look at how these are manufactured and **what extra goodies might be found in them that you wouldn't want in something that you take for your health.**

Most one-a-days have **artificial ingredients** such as coloring, which make them look good, but do nothing for your health; in fact, many people are allergic to these colorings. Other things you don't need in a supplement include sugar, artificial flavorings, and preservatives.

Typically, many one-a-day supplements are packed tightly in a capsule form for easy swallowing. Many times this compressed pill is too hard to actually digest in your stomach. X-ray technicians often see these pills far from the

stomach, never having dissolved. **A pill that is not digested is worthless and simply increases the nutrient content of your toilet water.** :-)

AVOID INACTIVE FORMS

Let's assume that the pill you are taking is actually digested in your stomach; for many one-a-day supplements, the problems are still not over yet.

An inactive form of a vitamin is one that must first be converted/activated by your liver before your body can use it (bioavailability). Unfortunately, for a great many people the liver is unable to convert or activate some of the most essential nutrients. Using these inactive forms of **poorly absorbed nutrients** in a supplement is one of the worst offenders of good nutrition. It allows the manufacturer to insert and list an ingredient, such as Vitamin B-12 (Cyanocobalamin), cheaply without concern for whether you are getting any benefit from it. You believe you are buying something that is doing you some good, but it is not. The label says you are getting all the nutrients you need for the day. The problem is that even if the pill actually contains these nutrients, it does you no good if your body doesn't actually absorb them.

Many companies who manufacture supplements look for the cheapest ingredients, not the ones that perform best in humans.

Absorption is just part of the story. Even if you have absorbed a nutrient, it still does not mean that it will be used by your body. The chemistry behind this is complicated, but many nutrients need to be changed in order to be used by your body. **The nutrients your body uses are called activated nutrients** and are identical to what your body needs.

It takes additional effort (and money) to make and use only the activated forms of nutrients. The effort is well worth it, as these active nutrients are easily absorbed and used by the body.

THERAPEUTIC DOSE

One-a-day supplements would have you believe that everything you need for a day is included in the supplement. The **laundry list of nutrients** makes it look as if you are getting a whole bunch of what you need.

But is it enough?

For most nutrients, the answer is no. You simply cannot pack what you need into a single pill; unless the pill is the size of a large grape, and even then you are missing some nutrients. **One pill in the morning is simply not enough and many nutrients are best taken at varying times of the day.**

The one-a-day pills miss completely the fact that **we need essential fatty acids, extra vitamin B, extra minerals such as calcium and magnesium, and extra antioxidants** just to ensure our bodies are optimally fed.

TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT WHO IS MAKING YOUR VITAMINS

One thing you might want to look for when choosing your daily nutrition is whether the company is simply trying to make money, or if it was started by someone who had a health problem helped by nutrition. People who have had a health problem and who have started companies to help others get healthy usually make great vitamins. They know first-hand what quality nutrients can do.

Choose a way to take supplements throughout the day and look for good quality ingredients. **A one-a-day vitamin belongs with other childhood myths**, your health should be in the hands of the best nutrition you can find.