

5 Nutrients YOU Don't Get Enough of

from Prevention Magazine by Stacy Colino

To
YOUR
Good
Health

Are You Falling Short?

**You can make up
the difference with
the foods you eat.**

- 1. Vitamin E**
- 2. Potassium**
- 3. Calcium**
- 4. Vitamin A**
- 5. Magnesium**

Vitamin E

You Need: 15 mg/day

You Probably Get: 6.4 mg/day

Your Shortfall: 57%

This powerful antioxidant protects your cells, helps them to communicate with each other, and defends your skin against UV damage. If you don't get enough vitamin E, you may have problems absorbing other nutrients.

Help Make It Up: Choose two or three daily

- 1/4 cup dry roasted sunflower seeds: Eat out of hand, or toss on salads.
- 1/4 cup wheat germ: Sprinkle these buds onto yogurt.
- 1 tablespoon avocado oil: Use instead of butter to sauté kale, Swiss chard, or other E-rich leafy greens.
- 1 cup red bell pepper: Chop and simmer in pasta sauce.
- 1 cup low-sodium canned white beans: Mash with spices, and use as a dip with celery sticks. Save \$ by cooking dry beans.

Vitamin A

You Need: 700 mcg/day

You Probably Get: 558 mcg/day

Your Shortfall: 20%

This nutrient powers your eyesight, especially your night vision, and keeps your skin, gums, and teeth healthy. It also boosts your immune system and helps you fight off viruses. The older you get, the more you seem to require it to protect cognitive function. A study at Utah State University found that older adults with high intakes of antioxidants, including carotene (from which your body makes vitamin A), had a slower rate of mental decline.

Vitamin A . . . Help Make It Up: Have one or two daily

- 1 small sweet potato: Baked, it's a flavorful, brightly hued sweet side dish.
- 1/4 cup canned pumpkin: Use along with a dash of cinnamon to jazz it up.
- 10 carrot sticks: Use as dippers for hummus.
- 1 cup cantaloupe cubed
- 1/2 cup dried apricots for a mid-morning snack

Magnesium

You Need: 320 mg/day

You Probably Get: 267 mg/day

Your Shortfall: 17%

Magnesium is used in hundreds of chemical activities in the body, ranging from storing energy to helping your genes function properly. It keeps your nerves and muscles toned, your bones strong, and your blood circulating steadily. This mineral is so influential that women who got at least the recommended amount cut their risk of metabolic syndrome by 38% or more, reported a study by the CDC. The serious, increasingly common syndrome, affecting some 50 million Americans, is a constellation of risk factors for heart disease and diabetes that includes excess abdominal fat, high blood pressure, and more.

Help Make It Up: Get three or four daily

- 1 cup cooked black beans: Toss into a salad, along with chopped parsley or cilantro.
- 1 ounce (6 to 8 whole) Brazil nuts: Chop and sprinkle on breakfast cereal.
- 1 cup okra: Simmer fresh or frozen chopped okra in chicken soup or stew.
- 1 cup cooked brown rice: Use as an accompaniment to stir-fry.
- 1 ounce almonds: Toast slivered almonds for a minute in a skillet over low heat, then sprinkle on fruit salad.

Potassium

You Need: 4,700 mg/day

You Probably Get: 2,458 mg/day

Your Shortfall: 48%

This electrolyte keeps your nervous system humming and your muscles toned. It also helps keep your blood pressure at normal levels. If you don't get enough, you may feel irritable, weak, and fatigued.

Potassium (continued)

To avoid this, you must eat enough potassium-rich foods and control sodium. That's because the two minerals need to be balanced in your body, and either too little potassium or too much sodium (which is often found in excess in packaged foods) can cause problems.

Help Make It Up: Pick three or four daily

- 1 medium baked potato, skin on: Top with salsa or chopped chives for a low-fat side dish.
- 1 cup ORGANIC edamame: Buy frozen already shelled and eat as a mid-afternoon snack or toss on top of any salad.
- 1 cup cooked spinach: Incorporate into a pasta dish or scrambled eggs.
- 1 cup cooked lentils: Have a bowl of low-sodium lentil soup.
- 1 cup sliced banana: Use a blender to whirl into smoothies or blend frozen to make a sugar free, yet sweet, iced treat.

Calcium

You Need: 1,000-1,200 mg/day

You Probably Get: 800 mg/day

Your Shortfall: 20-33%

This mighty mineral builds strong bones, and that means a lower risk of osteoporosis for you. Calcium can help prevent some other major diseases as well. In a study of nearly 84,000 women by Tufts-New England Medical Center, scientists found that those who consumed at least 1,200 mg of calcium daily (along with at least 800 IU of vitamin D, which helps absorption of the mineral) had a 33% lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Help Make It Up: Choose three or four daily

- 8 ounces low-fat plain yogurt: For dessert, pair with fresh or thawed frozen berries and garnish with mint.
- 3 ounces canned sardines with bones: Quarter the sardines while they're still in the can. Toss with chopped fresh tomatoes and salad dressing, and serve over mesclun mix.
- 1 ounce cheese your choice.
- 1/2 cup ORGANIC tofu: Stir-fry with veggies.
- 1 cup cooked chopped Bok Choy: Warm in broth for a calcium-rich soup.

If you feel overwhelmed by responsibility,
you have assumed more than what truly belongs to you. ~ Alan Cohen