

A Kid's Guide to Vitamins

You've probably heard a lot about vitamins. Maybe you take vitamin pills or hear adults tell you to eat your vegetables because they are loaded with vitamins. But what exactly are vitamins?

Vitamins are found in foods. They are very important for good health. There are two different kinds of vitamins. The first kind, fat-soluble vitamins are usually stored in your body until you need them. The second kind, water-soluble vitamins, travel through your bloodstream and are either used right away or sent out of your body when you urinate. All vitamins have special jobs to do in your body.

The fat-soluble vitamins are vitamin A, vitamin D, vitamin E and vitamin K. They can be stored in your body for as long as six months. Because of this, you have to be careful not to take vitamin pills that have too much of any of these vitamins. But if you eat foods with fat-soluble vitamins, you will probably never eat too much.

Vitamin A is very important for eyesight, especially at night or when you are in a dark place. It also helps you grow and keeps your skin healthy. You can get a lot of vitamin A from eggs, milk, carrots, spinach and sweet potatoes.

Vitamin D is important for strong bones and teeth. It also helps a mineral called calcium work to make your bones and teeth strong. The best foods to eat for vitamin D are milk, fish and egg yolks.

Vitamin E is great for your eyes and skin. It also keeps pollution from hurting your lungs. Also, vitamin E helps make red blood cells. If you eat whole grains (like oatmeal), leafy green vegetables, nuts and egg yolks, you are getting plenty of vitamin E.

The last fat-soluble vitamin, vitamin K, helps your blood clot when you get a cut. If your blood did not clot, you would not stop bleeding! So vitamin K is very important. You can get it by eating leafy green vegetables, liver, pork and dairy products like milk and yogurt.

The water-soluble vitamins are vitamin C and a whole group of B vitamins. Vitamin C is very good at protecting you from getting sick. In fact, in the winter, you might hear people telling you to take vitamin C

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or drink orange juice or citrus fruits. Oranges and other citrus fruits have a lot of vitamin C in them. Strawberries, tomatoes, broccoli and cabbage are other foods that are good to eat for vitamin C.

There are eight different B vitamins: B1, B2, B6, B12, niacin, folic acid, biotin and pantothenic acid. They are all important in making energy and sending it to wherever your body needs it. B vitamins help make red blood cells that carry oxygen throughout your body. You can get B vitamins in whole grains, seafood, poultry like chicken and turkey, fish, leafy green vegetables, and beans.

Your body cannot make vitamins by itself. Therefore, you can see that it is very important to eat many different healthy foods so that your body will get all of the vitamins it needs.

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A Kid's Guide to Vitamins Questions

1. The two types of vitamins are
 - a. simple and complex
 - b. whole and refined
 - c. fat-soluble and water-soluble
 - d. solid and liquid

For each vitamin below, name one food source of the vitamin and one role it plays in your body.

2. Vitamin A

food source:

role:

3. B Vitamins

food source:

role:

4. Vitamin C

food source:

role:

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5. Vitamin D

food source:

role:

6. Vitamin E

food source:

role:

7. Vitamin K

food source:

role:

A Kid's Guide to Vitamins Answers

1. c

For numbers, 2-7, answers will vary and may be any one of the following for each vitamin:

2. food source: eggs, milk, carrots, spinach, sweet potatoes
role: important for eyesight, helps you grow, keeps skin healthy
3. food source: whole grains, seafood, poultry, chicken, turkey, fish, leafy green vegetables
role: making energy and sending it to wherever your body needs it, making red blood cells
4. food source: oranges, orange juice, citrus fruits, strawberries, tomatoes, broccoli, cabbage
role: protects you from getting sick
5. food source: milk, fish, egg yolks
role: important for strong bones and teeth, helps calcium
6. food source: whole grains, oatmeal, leafy green vegetables, nuts, egg yolks
role: good for eyes and skin, keeps pollution from hurting lungs, helps make red blood cells
7. food source: green vegetables, liver, pork, dairy products, milk, yogurt
role: helps blood to clot, stops bleeding