

# Can Food Really Do It?

Thad Mauney, Ph.D.

Some experts say that for optimum health we should get all our vitamins and minerals from food rather than supplements. Can we really accomplish that? I think that this would be wonderful, but the answer is a big *MAYBE*.

The problems fall into two areas: our needs, and the nutrient content of food. For our population, there are major signs of poor nutrition: heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and many other disorders known to be influenced by a lack of nutrition. This would suggest that the foods we collectively have been eating are not delivering the best nutrient content and balance. Here in the US, we don't like to think of malnutrition as a local problem, but in fact, malnutrition technically just means wrong nutrition, so indeed malnutrition is a problem right here at home.

Different people really do have different nutritional needs. The biochemist Dr. Roger Williams called this "Biochemical Individuality." Some people thrive on the nutrients in ordinary food, while others require several times more, and a few people require hundreds of times more. For example, Vitamin B12 is found in meats, especially liver, but its absorption requires a special secretion of the stomach called the "intrinsic factor," plus good stomach acidity. People with poor absorption may need a thousand times more than food normally delivers, though that amount still would weigh less than a bread crumb.

If we are serious about getting the vitamins and minerals we need from our food we must make an effort to put high-nutrient-density foods on the plate every day. This is hard to do. Modern breeds of plants emphasize sweet taste over nutrient density, and modern farming emphasizes big crops over nutrient density. Some heavily farmed soils become deficient in the trace minerals and consequently the foodstuffs deliver less of those minerals than optimum. To make matters worse, modern food manufacturing emphasizes shelf life over nutrient density.

In the previous issue, I wrote about a research paper reporting that calcium as a single nutrient supplement was not as effective as the same quantity of calcium contained in foods. Of course not! Foods that contain that much calcium also contain an abundance of other nutrients as well. The



comparison is not between supplemental calcium versus food calcium, it is between low-nutrient-density foods plus a single added supplement versus high-nutrient-density foods that provide a wide array of nutrients. So I suggest you consider the following priorities in meeting your nutrient needs:

First, eat high-nutrient-density food, meaning lots of vegetables, greens and fruits, organically grown if you can afford it, grass-fed meats, scratch-fed eggs, and so forth. Skip the factory foods and the bulk fillers.

Second, take balanced multivitamin multimineral supplements to fill in any gaps you might not be aware of. Modest amounts of excess nutrients generally do no harm and are cheap insurance.

Third, use single-component supplements to fine tune the balance of your individual biochemical needs. For example, even people who eat high-quality foods include some who still might need extra B12, or calcium, magnesium, vitamin K, or vitamin D.

Food and supplements are not substitutes for each other, but complementary in trying to support optimum vitality and longevity. ■

—Wishing You Wellness!

Thad Mauney holds a Ph.D. in Analytical Chemistry. He is the author of "Preventing & Reversing Breast Cancer Naturally," and "Preventing & Reversing Prostate Cancer Naturally," with booklets on MRSA and Alzheimer's.

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### **Dr. Thad Mauney**

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(406) 672-4433 • tmauney@wtp.net