



Mineral Resources International

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Nutrient Synergy: Understanding the Complex Relationships of Vitamins and Minerals

Did you know that certain vitamins and minerals work together while others work against one another? Many people take single-nutrient supplements for specific health concerns, but they may actually be doing more harm than good. In this article, we explain why it's important to understand the complex, overlapping relationships between nutrients and why consuming a balance of nutrients may be best.

Understanding Nutritional Relationships

Many people who take dietary supplements to address a particular health concern consume supplements as a single nutrient—*i.e.*, chromium to help lower cholesterol, vitamin C to improve immunity, or calcium to help build strong bones. While supplementing one's diet with specific nutrients is a great way to replace essential vitamins or minerals absent from our modern diet, it may have some unintended, unforeseen consequences.

The primary concern, of course, with taking too much of one particular nutrient is that it can upset the body's delicate homeostatic balance of other nutrients, which, in turn, may increase the body's need for another nutrient, cause a nutrient deficiency, or result in an unintended effect on one's health. In some cases, it may defeat the original purpose of what the individual was trying to accomplish when they took a single-nutrient supplement in the first place.

In recent years, there have been significant advances in the field of nutritional research. Scientists are able to isolate certain nutrients and test their specific effects on human health, which has significantly furthered both science's and the public's knowledge of the powerful effect quality nutrition has on health and disease prevention.

Unfortunately, the majority of public perception of the benefits of dietary supplements is fueled, in large part, by marketing hype, which is not always accurately based on science. A common scenario is a new study is released showing that Nutrient X has been shown to burn fat, lower cholesterol, improve longevity, *etc.* The public is simultaneously bombarded by product ads claiming to not only contain Nutrient X, but to have the only patented, most concentrated, clinically proven, *etc.* isolated

Understanding the Complex Relationships of Vitamins, Minerals

form of Nutrient X. Consumers then come to believe the health benefit they are seeking comes solely from the *fill-in-the-blank* form of Nutrient X.

What this simplified, myopic view of nutrition fails to take into account is the larger issue—the big picture, if you will—which is how *nutrients, i.e.,* vitamins and minerals functions *together* and how their complex, interlocking relationships affect human health.

For a full-text copy of this article, please contact MRI at the number listed below or e-mail kariea@mineralresourcesint.com .



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