

The Benefits Of Vitamin E

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Vitamin E is an absolutely essential nutrient for your body, but most likely it can't do half the things you heard it can.

What does Vitamin E do?

For starters, vitamin E is an antioxidant. It controls dangerous free radicals and helps prevent blood clots and blockages in the coronary arteries. Research has discovered its ability to reduce the risk of chronic diseases, including heart attacks and some types of cancer.

It is also believed that vitamin E helps slow the aging process and assist nerve conduction. But most importantly, it act to enhance and protect vitamin C and vitamin A. There is also promising research that indicates that vitamin E might help prevent or slow the onset of cataracts.

Here are some of the diseases and conditions that vitamin E has been credited with curing or preventing:

- Parkinson's disease
- Infertility (in both men and women)
- Alzheimer's disease
- Hepatitis
- Eye tissue inflammation
- Fibromyalgia
- Hair loss
- PMS (pre-menstrual syndrome)
- Heavy menstruation
- Healing wounds
- Diabetes
- Arteriosclerosis
- Menopause
- Osteoarthritis
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Restless leg syndrome

Time will probably prove that vitamin E is helpful in some of these and other common health conditions, but probably not in many or even most of them.

As with many vitamins, there is a heated debate over how much vitamin E your body needs. The US recommended daily allowance (RDA) is 8-10 milligrams per day, but most people in the nutrition field believe that to enjoy the long-term benefits, you need 10 - 20 times that quantity, which is well short of the maximum recommended 1,000 milligrams.

Vitamin E is found in many foods in small quantities. The good news is that virtually everyone gets a sufficient amount of vitamin E to avoid a deficiency, with a few exceptions noted below. The bad news is that most people do not get the RDA, so vitamin E is definitely a vitamin that should be supplemented.

Be careful about which supplements you choose though, since the synthetic version of vitamin E isn't nearly as effective as its natural form. Look for nutritional supplements containing natural vitamin E, preferably in the liquid form.

People on low fat diets need supplements the most because oils and fats are the largest sources of vitamin E in our foods. Nuts and green, leafy vegetables are also excellent sources, as are liver, egg yolks, and whole grains.

While vitamin E will probably never be a cure for a broken heart or live up to half of the claims people make about it, it is a very important vitamin for maintaining overall good health, and it is needed in quantities above what most people get via the foods they eat.