



Vitamins

Vitamin C

What is it?

Vitamin C is ascorbic acid.

Why do I need it?

Vitamin C is essential in many body functions. Vitamin C is a fat-soluble vitamin that is produced by most animals but is not made by man, primates or guinea pigs. It aids in the absorption of iron and it helps promote a healthy immune system. Most importantly, it aids with the synthesis of collagen, the main protein in our connective tissue. Specifically, Vitamin C works inside the cell by adding hydrogen and oxygen to two amino acids: proline and lysine. This forms a precursor molecule called procollagen that is later modified into collagen outside the cell.

Vitamin C deficiency causes the disease Scurvy. Scurvy causes bleeding and inflamed gums, loose teeth and poor wound healing. The British Navy adopted the advice of James Lind back in 1753 when he advocated eating fresh vegetables and ripe fruits to prevent scurvy. That is why the British Navy became known as "limeys". They took lime juice on long sea voyages to avoid scurvy.

Vitamin C is easily damaged during the cooking preparation process but we usually get enough because it is so prevalent in the food we eat.

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Where do I find it?

The best sources of Vitamin C are citrus fruits.

Orange, one	60 mg.
Guava, one	165 mg.
White Grapefruit, half	40 mg.
Bell Pepper, one	95 mg.
Potato, with skin, one	25 mg.
Broccoli, boiled (1 cup)	60 mg.

How much do I need?

The recommended dietary allowance is 60-90 milligrams per day. Because smoking depletes Vitamin C levels in the body, smokers are encouraged to consume 35 mg more per day. To avoid scurvy, we need only 5-7 mg per day.

You need only very tiny amounts of these nutrients, but vitamins are absolutely essential for your health.

