



Food Does More Than Fill You Up! Part 1

We know that food is the fuel our bodies need for energy. It comes from the calories in the foods we eat. The parts of food that have calories are carbohydrates, protein, and fat. Food gives us more than calories it gives us vitamins and minerals.



Vitamins are the essential nutrients found in foods. Requirements for vitamins vary and the amount we need is small, but each vitamin and mineral plays a part in keeping our bodies healthy.

Vitamins are classified according to the substance they will dissolve in. Water-soluble vitamins dissolve in water and are not stored in the body. Excess of these vitamins is excreted in the urine. Since our bodies do not store water-soluble vitamins, we need a continuous supply of them. Water-soluble vitamins are the B-complex vitamins and vitamin C.

The other classification for vitamins is fat soluble. These are vitamins A, D, E, and K. We will take a closer look at these next month.

B-complex Vitamins

There are eight water soluble B-complex vitamins. They are found in many of the foods we eat every day.

B-complex vitamins help the body use the energy from food and are important for normal appetite, good vision, healthy skin, healthy nervous system and forming red blood cells. Here is a list of B-complex

vitamins and how they affect our body:

- Thiamin** (B1) is found in pork, liver, whole grains, enriched grain products, peas, meat, and legumes. Thiamin helps our body release energy from foods.
- Vitamin B2** or riboflavin is found in liver, milk, dark green vegetables, whole and enriched grain products, and eggs. This vitamin helps promote good vision and healthy skin.
- Niacin** is found in liver, fish, poultry, meat, peanuts, and whole and enriched grain products. Niacin aids in digestion, promotes normal appetite, and promotes healthy skin and nerves.
- Vitamin B6** is found in pork, meats, whole grains and cereals, legumes, and green leafy vegetables. B6 helps in protein metabolism and absorption and aids in red blood cell formation. It also helps your body use fats.
- Folacin** is found in liver, kidney, dark green leafy vegetables, meats, fish, whole grains, fortified grains and cereals, legumes, and citrus fruits. This vitamin is known for helping prevent birth defects of the spine. It also reduces risk of coronary heart disease.



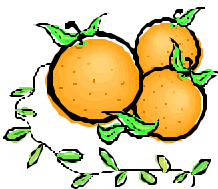
- B12** is found only in animal foods. B12 helps in building genetic material and aids in the development of normal red blood cells.

- Pantothenic acid** is found in liver, kidney, meats, egg yolk, whole grains and legumes. Pantothenic acid is involved in energy production and aids in the formation of hormones.

•**Biotin** is found in liver, kidney, egg yolk, milk, and most fresh vegetables. Biotin helps release energy from carbohydrates and aids in fat synthesis.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is also known as ascorbic acid. It works to help hold body cells together and aids in wound healing. Vitamin C also assists in bone and tooth formation, strengthens blood vessel walls, helps in the immune system, and improves the absorption of iron.



Vitamin C cannot be made in the body, therefore we need to include good sources of vitamin C in the foods we eat. Citrus fruits are the best sources of vitamin C. One orange, a kiwi fruit, 6 ounces of grapefruit juice or 1/3 cup of chopped sweet red pepper contain enough vitamin C for your body for one day.

Vitamin C is also found in foods like broccoli, strawberries, melon, green pepper, tomatoes, dark green vegetables and potatoes.

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Fresh Tomato Salsa

Serves 8

2 cups peeled, chopped tomatoes
1 small sweet onion, finely minced
1 jalapeno pepper, finely diced
1 tsp. oregano
2 tbsp. vinegar
1 tbsp. olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
1 clove garlic minced

Mix all ingredients together and serve with tortilla chips.

Nutrition information per serving: 30 calories, 2 g fat, 90 mg sodium, 3 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber. Also contains 10% of your daily need for vitamin A and 15% of vitamin C.

Note: omit the oil – you have 0 fat and only 15 calories per serving!

