

Vitamins that work with other vitamins or minerals:

- Vitamin C is needed to help the body absorb iron, so it can be used to collect oxygen and carry it round to all the cells in the body for energy production.
- Vitamin D is needed to help the body absorb calcium, so that it can be used to strengthen the bones and teeth and enable the nerves and muscles to work together.
- Vitamin B9 (folate) works with B12 (cobalamin) to help make healthy red blood cells.
- Vitamins B1, B2 and B3 help the body release energy from carbohydrate, fats and proteins

Groups that may need vitamin supplements:

Pregnant women – •If not eating properly due to morning sickness. •Growing baby needs iron, iodine, calcium, protein, B vitamins, which might deplete the amount needed to maintain mother's body. The baby needs to build up a store of iron and needs calcium and other minerals to develop its skeleton.

Young children—•Might not be absorbing all they need because digestive system is not fully developed. •They may have been premature and need extra nutrients to catch up. •They may have poor or small appetites or be fussy eaters, so won't eat enough of a variety of foods to get all their nutrients.

Elderly people – •They might not be absorbing all they need because their digestive system is not working as well as it used to. •They may have poor or small appetites. •They may be taking medicines that affect how much of each nutrient they absorb.

How to prevent damage and loss of vitamins to vegetables and fruit:

Storage:

- Store away from heat and light
- Store in air-tight containers in a cool place
- Store for minimum amount of time

During preparation:

- Buy undamaged and unbruised produce
- Tear rather than rip leafy vegetables
- Do not prepare too far in advance; vitamin C will be exposed to oxygen and lost when the vegetables are cut or peeled.
- Add lemon juice to prevent enzymic browning and stabilise vitamin C (ascorbic acid) in fruit.

During cooking:

- Put the into a small amount of boiling water so they cook quickly; vitamin C and B vitamins will be lost in the water.
- Cook all the vegetables for the minimum amount of time to minimise the damage by heat to vitamin C and B vitamins.
- Steaming reduces the loss of vitamin C and B vitamins to cooking water.
- Serve cooking water in the gravy to conserve some of the vitamins that have gone into it.

