

[IMAGE]

Eat Your Greens

By Julie T. Chen, MD

Nowadays, it seems that everywhere you turn, you see in the news that multivitamins may not be so good for you and you wonder where that information is coming from. Even though I am a huge fan of vitamins, I do have to agree with the notion that multivitamins are not always a great idea, because you should be getting your basic vitamins and minerals from your foods. For my patients who eat a lot of various types of vegetables and fruits and nuts, essentially eating the way Mother Nature intended us to eat, I don't prescribe them a multivitamin because it would be too much.

Many of my patients ask me how that's even possible to get all our nutrients from our diet as though the concept of getting what our body needs from real food is impossible. My take on multivitamins is that it should be used as a gap-filler in older patients who do not absorb as well. But in general, the world's best multivitamin is really Mother Nature's garden, and we should eat our basic greens as well as the reds, purples, yellows, and oranges.

It appears that in our modern age and time, the concept of eating a healthy balanced diet that is mostly plant-based and rich in greens and vegetables of other colors is a foreign concept. Instead, people prefer to pop a pill that gives them what they think they need for nutrients so that they can then eat based on cravings instead of with the goal of feeding our body what it needs to stay healthy. For those of you reading this article, you are probably more health-conscious and so are more likely to be making an effort to eat nutrients from your food...so if you are, you may not need a multivitamin. Just keep in mind that too much or too little of the nutrients our body needs may be more harmful than helpful. So if you are not sure if you should be taking one, check with your physician.

In regards to eating our greens and other various colored vegetables, the benefits are tremendous. Mother Nature accounts for things that we as human beings cannot. So, generally, my patients who eat a lot of greens and other vegetables, their skin is clearer and more balanced and glowing. Their hair is more vibrant and their overall health in terms of aging, sugar control, and cholesterol levels are all much better than those patients of mine who do not make eating vegetables a priority of daily life.

A plant-heavy diet affords us many benefits including increased fiber for intestinal health, heart disease prevention, and cancer prevention. It also provides us with all the fundamental building block nutrients that our body needs for all of our organ functioning and health...without the concerns of overdosing and harming ourselves as potential over-dosing on vitamins might cause. There are studies that show eating a mostly anti-inflammatory diet that is plant-based leads to overall less inflammation and helps with many chronic diseases like cancers, chronic pain, autoimmune diseases, allergies, heart disease, and even mood disorders as well, just to name a few.

So, as the summer months wind down, don't think that it means you should give up on eating fresh produce...at least one benefit of these modern times is that you should be able to have access to healthy organic produces year round...so that we can keep your body and mind healthy and happy year round as well.

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