



Does my child need a vitamin and mineral supplement?

Generally, there is no need for anyone to take vitamin and mineral supplements. Making sure children have well balanced diet, and regularly includes foods from the five food groups – breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables, meat and alternatives, dairy products and alternatives, and a small quantity of healthy fats and oils – should ensure that all nutrient needs are being met. If however, children are very fussy, or don't appear to be taking in all the nutrition they need, parents should consider seeking advice from a dietitian. Sometimes a basic multivitamin might be recommended, until their diet is able to provide all their vitamin and mineral needs. My opinion is that it's important to teach children from a young age that good food can help to make them healthy and fit, and that they shouldn't need to rely on a tablet as the "quick fix".

GETTING MORE VITAMINS FOR VITALITY

- Get your kids to count the different colours on their plate. Aim for at least 3 different colours
- Cut fruit into small bite-sized pieces and serve with yoghurt
- Blend very ripe fruit together with ice for a yummy fruit cocktail
- Use sauces like apricot sauce in chicken, mango sauce with fish and fresh raspberry sauce with ice cream
- Make smoothies from ripe banana, milk, yoghurt and a little honey
- Top pancakes with fresh fruit and fromage frais or yoghurt
- Offer vegetables raw while kids wait for their dinner eg carrot sticks, frozen peas, crisp beans
- Cut potato and sweet potato into chips, toss in a little olive oil and bake in the oven or barbeque
- Serve broccoli and cauliflower as small trees on a 'farm' of mashed potato with carrot flowers
- Kids love 'face plates'. Use small pieces of corn, capsicum, tomato, broccoli and peas to make the eyes, ears, nose and mouth of a fantasy creature. Let the kids do it themselves
- Make mini pizzas where each child decorates their own with pineapple, capsicum, lean ham, cheese, tomato and other vegetable choices.
- Grated carrot and cheese is a popular sandwich filling or cracker topping
- Avocados are rich in healthy fats and full of vitamins – use them as a spread or a snack for kids of all ages

(source – Gavin et al: Fit Kids)