

# The 5 Most Important Supplements

- by **Jim Healthy**, on Thu Sep 29, 2011 7:24pm PDT



I usually take a fistful of nutritional supplements every day. In fact, most people are speechless when they see my daily regimen.

I also travel with them — putting each day's allotment into plastic bags and stuffing them in my suitcase.

But I recently left the States for a four-week medical mission in Tibet and my gear was limited to 50 pounds. So there won't be room for my usual supplement supply.

So I've had to decide...

**“If I could only take five supplements, what would they be?”**

I only had room for five supplements per day, so they had to be the really important ones.

So here they are. By the way... these are also the ones I recommend you begin with if you're just starting out — or the ones you can cut back to if you need to save money. Anyway, here goes...

## 1. A high-quality multi-vitamin

Topping the list is an excellent quality multi-vitamin. This is essential because a multi “fills in the blanks” of your diet (no matter how good it is), so you're not running dangerously low on the essential nutrients your body needs for *optimal* functioning.

Be sure to avoid the TV-advertised one-a-days you find in your local drugstore. These are nearly worthless because their ingredients are based on the “bare minimum” official Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA), now upgraded to the Recommended Daily Intake (RDI).

The RDA evolved from the old Minimum Daily Requirement (MDR) set by the government. This means the nutrients in most of the popular multis contain the minimum doses necessary to prevent nutritional - deficiency diseases, such as scurvy (vitamin C), beriberi (vitamin B1), and others. This certainly is *not* how to guarantee optimal health.

These mainstream multis are notoriously feeble. For example, Consumer Reports recently concluded that Centrum is the worst vitamin for seniors in its class. (There goes that advertising revenue!)

Consumer Reports also found that The Vitamin Shoppe's One Daily failed to dissolve in a simulated stomach environment, while containing less vitamin A than its label claims.

You can avoid this pitfall by sticking to high-quality, bioavailable multivitamins that are reasonably priced and lab-tested. One of my favorites is **Ultimate Daily Support** from Real Advantage, formulated by Dr. William Campbell Douglass. It's a terrific multi that contains a broad list of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, amino acids, and enzymes that easily are absorbed and quickly bioavailable. This is the multinourishing my body in Tibet.

Another top-notch product is **Forward Multi-Nutrient**, formulated by Dr. Julian Whitaker, a friend and associate I've known for almost 20 years. Julian is a pioneer in the orthomolecular field and alternative medicine and has done so much to legitimize natural healing. He's also a living legend who was mentored by Dr. Linus Pauling.

## 2. A quality omega-3 supplement

Fish oil is today's bestselling supplement — and with good reason. The EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) in omega-3 fish oil have profoundly positive effects on human health.

DHA slows your liver's production of undesirable triglycerides, making it extremely protective against heart disease and diabetes.

In addition, fish oil is incredibly effective at reducing inflammation. It accomplishes this by triggering the release of prostaglandins (natural substances that regulate immunity, inflammation, blood clotting, brain function, plus a host of other essential functions).

There's not enough room here to list all the healing effects of omega-3. The highlights include: Healing blood vessel walls ... keeping the blood thin (thus minimizing clotting) flowing smoothly ... lowering blood pressure ... stabilizing blood sugar ... and brightening your mood.

The American Heart Association recommends a daily dose of 500-1,000 mg of DHA and EPA from fish oil to reduce heart disease — but I think this is a paltry dose. I prefer to take 6,000 to 9,000 iu daily in three equal doses — and find this really helps my arthritis.

There's just one problem. The huge demand for fish oil is wreaking havoc on marine life. Overfishing is depleting fish stocks and the oceans are on the brink of crisis.

Even oils extracted from krill (tiny, omega-3-rich crustaceans) are troublesome. That's because krill are at the bottom of the ocean's food chain — and larger fish depend upon them for life. Harvesting krill deprives all fish of their main food supply.

This is why I prefer to get my omega-3 from marine phytoplankton (also known as "micro algae") these days.

Phytoplankton is the plant-based omega-3 food source that supplies krill and other fish with EPA and DHA. Raised in large, land-based tanks, phytoplankton is free of mercury contaminants, heavy metals, and ocean pollution. Its good stuff — and you're not depriving fish of their food supply.

## 3. Co-enzyme Q-10

CoQ-10 (also known as ubiquinol) is a nutrient produced by the "energy factories" in your cells called mitochondria. Taking a CoQ-10 supplement boosts the way your cells produce and use energy. It also helps your body burn fat ... improves cholesterol ratios ... boosts your physical energy levels ... and improves thyroid and pancreas functions.

By the way, statins — the widely — (or is it "wildly"?) prescribed cholesterol-lowering drugs — actually *deplete* your body's natural CoQ-10. Statins block production of cholesterol in the liver, where CoQ-10 is also manufactured. Without sufficient CoQ-10, statins can cause liver damage ... irregular heartbeat ... muscle weakness ... leg cramps ... heart attack and stroke (the two potentially fatal conditions that statins are supposed to prevent).

Other medications also can limit your body's production of CoQ-10, including: Diabetes drugs ... antidepressants ... female hormone replacement therapy ... and blood pressure meds. If you take any of these, you definitely need to supplement with CoQ-10.

When shopping, labels may read "CoQ-10" or "Coenzyme Q-10", but the more active form will be labeled "QH" or "ubiquinol." This is a stronger form of CoQ-10, though purchasing that version isn't essential,

especially if price is an issue. Take 100 mg two or three times twice per day, because your body can't metabolize higher doses.

#### 4. Magnesium citrate

You've been hearing about calcium and bone health forever — but did you know that magnesium and calcium are like conjoined twins? Calcium can't even be absorbed unless magnesium is present. Without it, calcium is much less effective in maintaining your bones and regulating your nerve and muscle tone.

In fact, new research shows that Americans need far more magnesium than the current RDI — and that you should really be consuming *twice* as much magnesium as calcium for optimal health.

Magnesium may be the most important mineral you can take because it's a key player in 300 essential bodily functions, and is used by *all* of your organs. It activates enzymes ... powers your energy ... and helps your body absorb vitamin D, potassium, and zinc.

The majority of Americans are magnesium-deficient due to the low-quality, processed foods in the typical American diet. Produce grown in mineral-depleted soil won't provide much magnesium, either.

If you have blood sugar issues, you should know that magnesium helps regulate blood sugar and insulin activity. In addition, magnesium's ability to relax muscles and nerves makes it one of your best allies in the battle against anxiety ... hypertension ... restless leg syndrome ... sleep disorders ... and abnormal heart rhythm.

Consuming magnesium supplements can be challenging, as they tend to be large and difficult to digest. That's why I like [Natural Calm](#), a fruit-flavored magnesium powder that mixes easily in water. I take it in the evening because of its relaxing effect. Start with a low dose, because it can loosen your stools (not necessarily a bad thing if constipation is a problem). Another alternative is a topically-applied [magnesium chloride liquid](#) spray that's absorbed through the skin, which won't affect your bowels.

#### 5. Sunshine vitamin D

This is rapidly becoming the miracle vitamin of our time. Every week, it seems, there's a new finding about D's marvelous benefits. Most Americans are badly deficient in vitamin D because doctors consider the sun our enemy — and your skin converts solar rays into this essential vitamin.

Numerous studies show that this amazing vitamin is protective against all cancers (even skin cancer and melanoma!) ... strengthens bones ... prevents and even heals diabetes ... protects against heart disease ... lowers blood pressure ... reverses depression ... and elevates mood.

Whenever you can, spend 10-20 minutes sunbathing — *without* sunscreen. (Your body transforms sunshine into all the vitamin D it needs.) If your access to sunlight is limited by season or geographic location, take 2,000-5,000 iu of a good quality vitamin D supplement daily. (The elderly and African-Americans need higher doses.) Official recommendations call for a scant 600 iu, which is far too low. Just make sure you purchase vitamin D3 (not D2) because the D3 form is 87% more potent than vitamin D2.

#### No more “supplement overwhelm”

Taking these five supplements should cover all the important bases and provide your body with optimal nutrition (provided you're eating a healthy diet).

Now I'd like to hear from you. Do you have a favorite supplement that I've missed? Do you have a story about how a particular supplement or herbal remedy turned your health around?

Please share whatever's on your mind about nutritional supplements here so we can all benefit from your experience.