

# Why you need more than Vitamin C as you age?

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## *“Resetahan mo ako ng Vitamin C.”*



Perhaps, this must be one of the most common requests coming from our patients who are above 50 yrs. old. They think that their health and immunity problems can be addressed by simply taking Vitamin C. And because of this notion, the importance and contribution of other essential vitamins, minerals and probiotics tend to be overlooked. This issue needs to be addressed, especially now that proper oral nutrition supplementation acquires more importance as we advance in years.

Just like cars, we can get the most mileage out of our bodies if we use it properly and also if we regularly check it for maintenance. Exercise and good nutrition should allow one to add more years to life. The passage of time however produces inevitable changes in our body, forcing it to require further care. Eventually, the body's defenses become a little weaker. The ability to immediately react (innate immunity) and have a long lasting defense (adaptive immunity) against infections are further impaired by lack of proper nutrition, depriving one of vitamins such as D and E and minerals like Zinc and Calcium. Infections therefore pose a greater threat.

Exercise tolerance may diminish likewise, causing one to become more sedentary, decreasing time for physical activity and getting up for the early morning sun. Deconditioning results in a loss of muscle mass, cascading into a vicious cycle.

Most of the necessary vitamins and minerals can be derived from a well-planned meal and access to food, but with limited mobility and poorer appetite, nutrition may still get affected. When the sense of smell and taste become blunted, the ability to enjoy food becomes diminished. And even if the intake is adequate, absorption of the nutrients through the gastrointestinal tract becomes less efficient.

With these in mind, oral nutritional supplementation, which contains most of the necessary vitamins and minerals may play a vital role.





# What are some of the nutritional needs that has to be augmented as we age, and how can we boost our access to them?

- **Protein** is needed to maintain muscle mass. Loss of muscle mass could result to weakness. Whey provides high quality protein and is also faster to digest and easier to absorb.
- **Vitamin B12 and folic acid** are needed for our red blood cells and nerve function. These can be sourced from fish, meat, poultry, eggs, dairy as well as fruits and vegetables.
- **Vitamin C** is said to be helpful in boosting immunity. It is usually found in fruits (Orange, Grapefruit, Mango, Etc.) and Vegetables (Broccoli, Tomatoes, Cabbage, Etc.).
- **Calcium** is essential for the bones. A deficiency may make bones brittle and prone to fractures. Milk and tofu can provide ample amounts of Calcium. People with lactose intolerance can opt for lactose-free oral supplements for their calcium supply needs.
- **Vitamin D** helps the calcium-absorption of the body to keep the bones strong. Fatty fish, like tuna and salmon, and eggs are great sources.
- **Vitamin E** has antioxidant properties which aids in the protection against the effects of exposure to tobacco smoke and radiation. This can be found in peanuts, almonds, meat and leafy greens.
- **Prebiotics and probiotics** secure the maintenance of a healthy gut microbiome - which allows the growth of friendly organisms that enhance digestion.
- **Zinc** aids in strengthening immune system and metabolism function. This nutrient can be found in meat, eggs, dairy, and whole grains.



Oral nutritional supplementation helps in coping with deficiencies that may be brought about by physical disability, illness or social circumstances. It is meant to boost and not replace good dietary habits and practices.

In order to strengthen our immune system and boost our bodies as we age, the best thing we could do is to keep on supplying it with proper amount of nutrition.



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