

## Seniors Need More Than a Multiple with Only 100 Percent of the RDA

The aging process is a gradual one. That might seem obvious, and it is, but it is the fact that it is gradual that causes people not to notice the small but significant changes in their body that are taking place. Aging is more than just the oxidation of skin cells that cause them to wrinkle, but involves specific functional cell changes, such as their ability to multiply.

As this slows down the immune system is affected, and we find it more difficult to recover from injury and disease. Oxidation becomes more prevalent and free radicals become more common as the natural antioxidants of our bodies become overwhelmed. We are less able to recover from the effects of environmental stress, such as UV radiation from the sun, pollution and the effects of heat. We find it increasingly difficult to deal with a lack of nutrition or toxins in our food from pesticides. In short, we become less capable of dealing with attack by invaders, but do not notice this gradual lack of immune response.

Age also affects our joints from the vertebrae in the neck to the joints of our toes. The net result is a compression of the bones that causes a reduction in height. We also develop more body fat and less muscle tissue, which is a significant consideration in planning the nutritional needs of the elderly. However, of more critical importance when discussing the nutritional needs of our aging population is the possibility of malabsorption.

Malabsorption is an inability of the digestive system to absorb nutrients from food, and occurs in people of any age although it tends to be more prevalent in seniors. It is predominantly due to a dysfunction of the liver, the pancreas or the small intestine that are the three major physical components of the human digestive system.

The liver produces bile that is needed to process the fats in your food, and if the bile is not delivered to the small intestine, then malabsorption is possible. The same is true of the enzymes that are produced by the pancreas. These enzymes are important components in the biochemistry that allow us to absorb nutrition from our food, and since most of this absorption occurs in the small intestine, this too is essential for proper absorption. When any of these three are reduced in efficiency, as they are with advancing years, then malabsorption will occur.

When this occurs in seniors, however, it is essential that a multiple supplement with more than 100% of the RDA (Recommended Daily Allowance) is used. This type of nutritional deficiency can be very serious at an age when so many normal biochemical processes are slowing down, and it is important that steps are taken to avoid the serious problems that can arise.

The immediate symptoms of malabsorption are diarrhea and weight loss, although the more serious longer term effects are anemia due to a deficiency in folic acid and iron and a reduction in the blood's ability to form clots due to a deficiency in vitamin K absorption. There are others, but not all problems associated with aging are actually due to malabsorption, or even with aging.

Many of the problems associated with aging are now believed to be connected with the patient's lifestyle and diet. Heart disease such as atherosclerosis is now known to begin earlier in life, as are many other conditions once believed to be associated with age. A loss of cognitive ability can be age related, but also due to cigarette smoking and excessive alcohol consumption. However, irrespective of all this, it is essential that the aged are provided with vitamin and mineral supplements offering more than 100% RDA.

Calcium is of particular importance for older women who are particularly prone to osteoporosis due to malabsorption of calcium from their food. At least 1000mg daily should be taken, and extra magnesium and vitamins A and E will also be necessary since they are needed for the proper absorption of calcium. The extra does not infer that all of the supplement will be absorbed, but that enough should be to help reduce the possibility of bone density problems.

The elderly are particularly prone to vitamin B deficiencies, particularly of vitamin B12, due to absorption problems and a good vitamin B complex supplement is needed. Chromium too can be seriously depleted in the aged, and this mineral is necessary to enhance the activity of insulin. It is also believed to play a part in the metabolism of carbohydrates, proteins and fats. There are no known consequences of an excess of chromium so a good supplement can be provided. It is believed that vitamin B and chromium together are required for cardiovascular and neurological health that are so important as we age.

One important supplement for the elderly is Coenzyme Q10. Many older people are prescribed drugs such as statins for the treatment of high cholesterol levels. Statins work by depressing the biochemical synthesis of cholesterol by blocking the action of mevalonate, and this is known to interfere with the metabolism of Coenzyme Q10, otherwise known as ubiquinone.

CoQ10 is essential in allowing the production of energy within the cell mitochondria by allowing electron transfer back and forth between NAD and

NADH to allow the production of adenosine triphosphate (ATP). A supplement of this important enzyme is therefore essential in maintaining the energy levels of the aged who are being prescribed statins.

Almost 20% of the elderly on prescription drugs are also taking herbal remedies and supplements, and there could be an interaction between them. Anybody taking prescription drugs should consult their physicians before taking natural remedies or any form of supplement, and this is particularly true of the elderly.

However, where the elderly are safely taking a vitamin and mineral supplement, it is extremely important that this contains more than just the RDA. Absorption problems are very common in the elderly, and this excess can make sure that they receive more than they would otherwise, if not the whole recommended dosage of the particular substance involved. Better safe than sorry, especially where an excess is not known to cause harm.

### About the Author

More information on [multiple vitamin](#) supplements for seniors is available at VitaNet &reg, LLC Health Food Store. <http://vitanetonline.com/>

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