

# Should your kids take multivitamins or supplements?

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Vitamins are one of the most common ways to ensure children receive essential nutrients for growing in the healthiest way possible, but over-the-counter vitamins may be doing more harm than good.

Over-the-counter multivitamins are often filled with sugar and additional supplements that may not be necessary in every child's diet. When these vitamins are taken too often, they can become counterproductive for the health of the child, especially when given in higher doses than recommended by professional sources.

Fat-soluble vitamins like A and D are stored in the body and gradually released over time, but the excess consumption and storage can potentially lead to toxic levels. Taking too much vitamin A can lead to vomiting, brain swelling and distorted vision. Too much vitamin D can cause nausea and vomiting, liver damage and extreme levels of calcium in the blood can damage the heart's function.

To avoid the risks associated with multivitamins and supplements, you can readily incorporate vitamins A, B, C, D and K into a child's diet through fresh foods. Here are a few food suggestions to implement into your child's diet:

- Vitamin A: Kale, spinach, broccoli, carrots, [sweet potatoes](#) and pumpkin.
- Vitamin B: Fortified whole grains (cereal), [green vegetables](#), bananas and brown rice.
- Vitamin C: Oranges, kiwi, tomatoes, melons, strawberries and bell peppers.
- Vitamin D: Calcium fortified milks, salmon, [egg yolk](#) and tuna.
- Vitamin K: Collard and turnip greens, cabbage, lettuces and soybean.

When a child's body is still developing, it is best to keep their vitamin intake to natural levels by feeding them a well-balanced diet. Fresh fruits and vegetables are the best source of vitamins because the child can get the most out of the food while the parent knows exactly what the child is ingesting.

It may be difficult to incorporate new fresh foods in a child's diet, especially if they are a picky eater. Make mealtime fun by thinking of creative ways to introduce new flavors.

Every child has different dietetic requirements, so talk to your [health care provider](#) or dietitian about the best diet for your child.

Provided by University of Kentucky

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