

Fact Sheet

(CHS_FS_GNS_029)

VITAMINS AND CHILDREN

In general, children do not require vitamin supplements. The best way children can obtain vitamins is from eating a sufficient and well balanced diet. Some children with medical conditions will require supplementation, in which case discussion with a doctor should occur. In addition, children's lifestyle or diet (eg. vegetarian) may influence their ability to consume adequate vitamins and minerals. Their diets will need to be assessed and diet modification and/or supplements may be needed.

Some infants and toddlers' eating behaviour can become erratic and inadequate. This becomes a problem when the pattern of not eating persists over an extended period. If this occurs, seek medical advice to eliminate any medical conditions causing the child's poor dietary intake. If there is no medical reason, then a multivitamin supplement may be appropriate.

It is important to remember that adult vitamin preparations are not suitable for children. Parents and other care-givers should be aware of the contents of vitamin preparations and tonics that they give to children. High doses of vitamins can be dangerous and can cause severe illness. All the implications and impact of "megavitamin" intakes are not yet fully known or understood.

REFERENCES

Wilcox, J. Vitamin Supplements for Toddlers and Children, *Children's Nutrition*, RCH, June 1994.

Additional information on feeding infants and children:

Infant and Toddler Feeding Guide: Parent Information, Royal Children's Hospital Department of Nutrition and Dietetics with the Community Child Health Service, 2002. Available from the Royal Children's Hospital.

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