

Food for thought – an article by Sandra Clarke

A new way to look at health and nutrition

Nutritional advice has generally been based on the premise that the particular nutrient we are deficient in is the one that needs to be supplemented. Recent research indicates that oxidative stress is the cause for nutritional deficiency. Oxidative stress is caused by free radicals in our bodies which damage our cells resulting in degenerative disease. Free radicals are produced by external influences on our bodies and is the result of our cells being damaged by free radicals, causing a weakened immune system.

This has demonstrated that there is a clear link between nutrition and degenerative diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure, so if we take in sufficient nutrients, we can reduce long-term health risks.

It is no longer possible to get all our nutritional needs from a good, healthy diet as combating degenerative diseases requires far higher levels than the recommended daily allowance, while pollution and other environmental factors have reduced the amount of nutrition in the soil. And only 14% of adults in the UK were found to be eating a healthy diet.

So, we need more, food provides less and we eat too little of those right foods – what options do we then have?

The answer lies in the use of nutritional supplements – multi-vitamin tablets in addition to that healthy diet and adequate exercise. To ensure we get the right supplements, we need to do our research, as research found huge variations in the quality of the supplements on our shelves. They vary from effective to downright harmful.

There are three key points we can use to help us choose supplements that are actually going to help us.

- Bio availability:
 - Each tablet should dissolve readily in our bodies. Over 54% of all vitamin tablets tested have revealed that they do not dissolve well.
- Formulation quality
 - The quality of ingredients varies greatly and it is important to choose a manufacturer who focuses on the highest quality ingredients
 - The purity of the ingredients: natural is not always best. Some ingredients can be contaminated by metals and other impurities absorbed in the ground and it is not always possible to filter them out completely so there are two issues to look out for: the effort taken by manufacturers to source the purest possible ingredients and the care taken by manufacturers to find the best source for the ingredients
 - The quantity of ingredients: as mentioned earlier when talking about oxidative stress, it is not enough to provide the body with just those nutrients that we are deficient in, as we need to encourage the cells to absorb each lacking nutrient and this can only be done by providing products that are appropriately balanced with all the vitamins and minerals the cells need to absorb everything it needs.

- **Manufacturing standards:**
And last but by no means least is the issue how supplements are manufactured. There are two basic options: pharmaceutical grade and food grade. Food grade means that each ingredient used must be listed on the package, but the quantities listed refer to an average content rather than the actual per tablet quantity. This can lead to huge variations from one tablet to the next. Pharmaceutical grade, as the name indicates, means that supplements are produced to the same high standards as any pharmaceutical drug, so in extremely sterile and carefully controlled environments with each individual tablet rigorously checked and each tablet containing the exact stated quantity. Look out for the 'GMP' symbol, a logo given to those products produced to those standards. Furthermore, bottles that are food grade production will state that the ingredients listed are average amounts.

For a comprehensive evaluation of thousands of products on the US, Canadian and Australian market, use Nutrisearch's 'A Comparative Guide to Nutritional Supplements' compiled by Lyle MacWilliam, a biochemist and nutritional expert.

For more information and my recommendation, ring me on 01451 832 206 at Smadar Health.

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