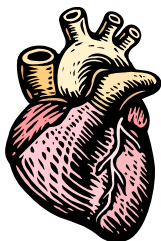


## Facts about Vitamin E<sup>1</sup>

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### Why do we need vitamin E?



Vitamin E is an antioxidant that helps protect the body from the effects of free radicals. Free radicals are substances that can damage the body's cells. Free radicals may increase the risk for heart disease and cancer.

Vitamin E often is measured as milligrams (mg) of alpha-tocopherol. It also can be measured as International Units (IU). Supplements usually show vitamin E content as IU.

The following table lists recommended daily intakes of vitamin E:

### What happens if we don't get enough vitamin E?

A deficiency of vitamin E can affect the nervous system and the eyes. It also can cause a form of anemia ("hemolytic" anemia).

Vitamin E deficiency is very rare, but it can develop in people who can't absorb fat normally. This is because vitamin E is a fat-soluble vitamin and needs dietary fat to be absorbed. People who don't get enough vitamin E may have higher risks for heart disease and cancer.



Life Stage	Vitamin E per day
Men, ages 19+	15 mg (22 IU)
Women, ages 19+	15 mg (22 IU)
Pregnancy	15 mg (22 IU)
Breastfeeding	19 mg (28 IU)
mg = milligrams IU = International Units	

### How much vitamin E do we need?

In food, vitamin E is found in many forms. The form that is most usable in our bodies is called alpha-tocopherol.

### How can we get enough vitamin E?

Vegetable oils, salad dressings, and margarines are the richest dietary sources of vitamin E. Other good sources are nuts and green leafy vegetables. Fortified cereals also are good sources of vitamin E.



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Here are some foods and the amount of vitamin E they contain:

Food	Vitamin E	
	mg	IU
Cereal, fortified, 1 cup	20-40	30-60
Sunflower seeds, dry, 1 oz	14	22
Almonds, dry roasted, 1 oz	8	11
Wheat germ, ¼ cup	3	4
Peanut butter, 2 Tbsp	3	4
Vegetable oil, 1 Tbsp	3	4
Mango, raw, 1	2	3
Mayonnaise, 1 Tbsp	2	3
Broccoli, frozen, cooked, ½ cup	2	3
Turnip greens, frozen, cooked ½ cup	1	2
mg = milligrams IU = International Units oz = ounces Tbsp = tablespoons		

### What about supplements?

Foods can supply the recommended amount of vitamin E for good health. Many people choose to take a vitamin E supplement. Recent studies do not support use of vitamin E supplements for prevention of heart disease.



Before deciding to take a supplement, talk with your doctor. He/she can tell you how much to take and if there may be interactions with other drugs or supplements that you take. For example, vitamin E supplements can be harmful if you take blood-thinning drugs like warfarin (Coumadin®), or aspirin.



### How much is too much?

**You should not get more than 1000 mg (1500 IU) of alpha-tocopherol per day from supplements.** Doses above this amount increase the risk of bleeding problems. When bleeding occurs in the brain it can cause a hemorrhagic stroke.

### Where can I get more information?

The Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) agent at your county Extension office may have more written information and nutrition classes for you to attend. Also, a registered dietitian (RD) can provide reliable information to you.

Reliable nutrition information may be found on the Internet at the following sites:

<http://fyics.ifas.ufl.edu>

<http://www.eatright.org>

<http://www.nutrition.gov>

<http://mypyramid.gov>

