

Rebellious Wellness^{over 50}

Stop Hating on Supplements! But Do Your Research



Episode 64: Stop Hating on Supplements! But Do Your Research with Gregory Anne Cox

Gregory Anne: Hey everybody. This shorty is in response to all the supplement bashing I see out there in the ether. Like everything else these days, there are lovers and haters, scientists, and charlatans, all offering advice and like almost everything else in the world of health and aging, it gets confusing who to trust.

Well, I'm a person who trusts lab tests, research, and reliable experts to guide me. Full disclosure, I'm on the side of supplements as an important part of a healthy aging. I do not represent any company, nor do I make any money recommending certain brands. Now that that's out of the way, I'm also on the side of, get as much nutrition as you can from clean, healthy foods and pure water.

That's your baseline, from there supplement what you are lacking, whether from diet, disease, or to counteract a prescription medication's side effects.

Now, speaking of tests, you can't or might not want to test for every single thing you might be deficient in. But optimal levels of certain of these compounds are critical to health right now, and for the future, for healthy aging, like D and omega 3s. And I'll talk about those more in a minute or two.

What I hope you'll get from this shorty is enough information to decide for yourself if supplements are a worthwhile investment or expensive pee. What you won't get are recommendations of how much of something to take, or even whether you need any of the supplements I talk about.

If you've been around, you know, I live by the mantra, we are all individuals biochemically. All this means is what's good for me may damned well kill you. Or at least make you feel bad.

Don't take things because they work for someone else. Unless you have done your research and can monitor the impact said supplement is having.

And supplementers beware. You may never feel anything different from taking something. That doesn't mean it's not working. And it also doesn't mean it's not doing harm. So once again, test don't guess when possible.

So what is a vitamin anyway? In two words, organic compounds. Organic ones come from things that were alive. Minerals on the other hand are inorganic and come from soil or water.

There are about 13 vitamins that we need to function well that we cannot manufacture in our bodies. Vitamin D being the exception as the body can make it. It's then called a precursor hormone and we can take it, get it from food or ingest it from a supplement and use it that way. And always, and only take a gel cap when it comes to supplementing with the D rather than a hard tablet.

Why? Because D is a fat soluble vitamin precursor hormone. So it must be taken in the form of fat or in a fat base to be fully bio available. Now, a word about the word supplement. If it isn't obvious, these products we buy to the tune of \$151 billion per year in the year, 2021 in the US are meant to fill in the gaps where our diets leave us short.

So here's what vitamin or mineral supplements can do.

Improve levels of vital organic compounds that we can't make in the body like D, K, and the B vitamins. We can get them from foods if we eat right. And if our food is grown and or raised on clean mineral, rich soils, but optimal levels are hard to maintain from diet alone. These days, if you follow a vegan diet, for example, it's almost impossible to get enough B12, D3, iodine, creatin and iron, because you're not having the animal food products, which is where those things are most prevalent, most abundant.

These should be supplemented. The flip side would be a diet very high in meat and dairy, and then taking supplemental D or B12. You could end up with too much of those important nutrients. Speaking of too much, too much iron can be as problematic as too little. You're likely familiar with and maybe have suffered with anemia or iron deficiency.

But what about iron overload? Too much iron can be the result of taking a few different supplements, all containing iron, like hair formulas, as well as a multi often contain this mineral. So you gotta check your labels. It can also be caused by a hereditary condition called hemochromatosis. Something I have and was diagnosed with thanks to my persistence in getting to the bottom of symptoms like fatigue, rapid heart rate at rest constipation.

And a functional medicine doc, who was willing to think outside the hormone/ Lyme disease, "this is what happens at your age" boxes and send me for a genetic test. It didn't show up til my early forties, even though I have a gene from each parent. Why then? Hysterectomy, thanks to fibroids which meant no bleeds.

Many women will be diagnosed at menopause because we stop having monthly bleeds, which is when we would get rid of the little bit of iron that's too much. Too much iron is dangerous for the heart, liver, and brain. Not unlike too much sugar in your blood. It rusts you on the inside. It's easily managed anyway for me for right now by donating blood about every two months or so.

So I grabbed this bit of data from one of my favorite books called *The Body* by Bill Bryson. He says, "as recently as 2013, an editorial in the annals of internal medicine, based on a study out of Johns Hopkins university said almost everyone in high income countries was sufficiently well nourished to not require vitamin supplements of any kind.

And we should stop wasting money on them." Well, a hail storm of criticism followed from the likes of Harvard medical school and the CDC to name just a couple of the well respective voices. The CDC wrote that far from having plenty of vitamins in our diet, 90% of American adults don't get the recommended daily dose of D and E and 50% are deficient in vitamin A..

They went on to say that 97% don't get enough potassium a vital electrolyte that keeps your heart healthy and beating smoothly and your blood pressure at reasonable levels. Even a super healthy person who has optimal levels of vitamins and minerals one day, could find themselves depleted after a course of say, proton pump inhibitors, chemotherapy, or other prescription medications.

So we're always changing, right? We're not static as a body. So what is enough of these things? Well, more debate as you'd likely expect me to say. In the UK three to four milligrams of vitamin E is the RDA in the US that number is 15. That's a huge difference. A little known organization called the food and nutrition board

sets the RDA or recommended daily allowance of vitamins and minerals. Sadly, their recommendations are often way below what is optimal for health at the many stages of . The food and nutrition board FNB as it's called, was established in 1940 during world war II, to advise the army on guidelines for good nutrition, the FNB realized the need to develop recommendations for nutritional intake for both the general public and the armed forces

and introduced RDAs the following year. Their goal was to estimate the amount of a nutrient necessary per day for the maintenance of, I'm using air quotes, good health, as it relates to RDAs refers to the minimum nutritional amounts necessary to avoid disease conditions, such as scurvy, something caused by two little vitamin C or rickets caused by two little vitamin D.

Even with a number of RDAs, there are still essential nutrients that the body needs that do not have an RDA. An example here is there's an RDA for vitamin K1, but not for the other very important form of that vitamin vitamin K2. In addition, the FNB does not have an RDA for omega 3 fatty acids, DHA and EPA, despite tremendous amounts of research on their importance on cognitive health at all stages of life.

Oh, so what kinds of vitamins taken as supplements make a difference in health? Well, I can't lump you all into one big bucket of supplement needs, and I am not a doctor, so I don't prescribe anything to anyone. What I do do is share well researched info for you to take and use or file away for another time.

Maybe this shortie spurs you into research mode or to get some labs done. So you can know for certain whether your body needs supplemental nutrition. There will be references on the page for this podcast, which you can find at rebelliouswellnessover50.com slash podcast. All of that said the following two vitamins are proven to support health and therefore healthy aging.

There are more of course, but too many to talk about here, I will do other shorties on specific ones like magnesium, and whether you should take bone supplements.

Let's start with D. Vitamin D is necessary for immune system functioning period. For those with thyroid issues, optimal levels of vitamins D are a must.

Because all hormones work to support one another. And while we refer to D as a vitamin, as I said earlier, it's a precursor hormone. A thing that helps hormones function.

Your bones need vitamin D because it helps the body use calcium. According to Harvard school of public health at their website, low levels are associated with heart disease, cancer, diabetes, even mortality.

The first source of vitamin D is the sun. Hence it's nickname, the sunshine vitamin. Sunscreen- free exposure for 15 to 20 minutes a day will do the trick for most people. But guess what? Without enough cholesterol, your body can't synthesize enough vitamin D from sun exposure. So all of you trying to lower your levels down into the basement of

cholesterol might want to think twice as balancing something else important that has to go on in your body.

For those who don't live in a sunny region who have dark skin or don't have the time or the inclination to absorb their vitamin D from the sun, supplements are the way to go. D is found in some foods, but most of us aren't likely to eat enough

fatty fish, eggs, dairy, and fortified cereal to get the optimal dose every day. Two last things you should know when you look for vitamin D as a supplement: buy D3, not D2. You should start out with a blood test and see where it is. If you are below the optimal levels, which I'm gonna give you a place to find that in a minute, then you'll take supplement 2000 milligrams, three, four, especially if you're working with practitioner, they'll tell you how much to start with.

Usually people start with 2000 a day if they're low. Then test again in six months. And see if your levels are increasing. If you are an already supplementing, and don't live outside in the sun naked, you are likely deficient. So if you wanna find out about optimal levels versus conventional wisdom, what the RDA says.

I want you to go to the vitamin D council, all one word, vitamin small d council.org, and they will give you all the info you need. Next up omega three fatty acids. You may have heard that polyunsaturated fatty acids or POAs are super healthy. The most common of these are omega three and six fatty acids. While we can use these nutrients, we can't make them in the body.

We definitely want a healthy supply of the 3s with less of the 6s because the sixes are pro-inflammatory. And as we all know, if you didn't know it yet, you're gonna know it now, inflammation is the top of the food chain in terms of aging issues. Most docs, reputable science teaching hospitals are talking about reducing inflammation as a way to reduce markers of aging, slow them down, et cetera. So where can you find these things? Well, 6s are found in processed foods and vegetable oils, like corn oil, peanut oil canola. in abundance.

So that's another good reason to limit those things. The American diet, we have like 25 times the omega six to omega threes in our body. It should be two to one, 3 to 6 right? So you should be getting twice. The amount of 3s as 6s. And in our country, at least it's way upside down.

During our reproductive years, a diet low in omega 3s has been associated with increased menstrual pain and infertility. Also premature births, who knew? Low omega 3s have also been linked, this is something you're gonna want to listen to girls, with an increase in the risk of depression

in both genders, though, women suffer more. We have higher rates of depression and more severe symptoms of depression than men from low omega 3s. So there are three types of omega 3s, ALA, which is the vegetarian form, then EPA and DHA. Those are the ones that are most helpful to the body, the easiest for the body to use, excuse me.

And your body needs these in high quantities to achieve the benefits they offer. These two are found in the following foods, fish like salmon, macro herring, sardines, Cod liver oil, algae oil, and krill oil. ALA is not the best form of omega three to rely on as it has to convert from ALA to EPA and DHA and it's an inefficient process.

So only about 10% of the ALA you consume is converted to the body, to the version your body needs. So beware vegans, and some vegetarians. You're gonna have to work hard to get your omega 3s if you're only relying on vegetarian sources of omegas. Now, what if you don't consume a good amount of fish each week, you don't like fish.

You're likely gonna fall short of the optimal amount recommended to protect your brain, heart, and eyes. So how much do you need? Again? I can't prescribe a one size fits all answer here, but one of my go-to docs is Dr. Axe. A X E You can find him online. He has so much great information.

He's the most balanced, functional medicine doc I know of. He recommends through a combination of foods and supplements, "be sure to get at least a thousand milligrams a day of an EPA DHA combination daily and about 4,000 milligrams of total omega threes, which is ALA, EPA and DHA." So I'll post a link on my podcast page to his grade infographics and more information on the topic.

So to pull this all together, my experience with supplements is what has me convinced they are not just expensive urine. When my D levels were low. I started taking supplemental vitamin D. My immunity to the fall and winter bugs that used to visit they've been locked out. I just don't get what everybody gets anymore. I recently added collagen into my routine because I felt like my hair was really thinning. My nails looked terrible and after, oh, I would say 60 days, my hair is growing faster.

I have to shave my legs more, which is not so much fun, but I have stronger nails. So there's a supplement, a proven result. Some have been suggested by my functional medicine doc, when a lab test is not where we want it. And I have yet to be disappointed at the expense of adding what his suggestion was.

My favorite resource for information on supplements, the companies that make them and whether or not they contain what is on the label, this is super important you guys, it's consumerlab.com. Again, the link will be on this page, the podcast page.

So there's a lot here. I hope I haven't made things more confusing.

I'll end by saying it is my belief that most of us could use some support in the nutrition realm and safe supplements in the right amounts can help prevent the parts of aging we want to skip. Disease, ill health, fractures, memory loss, et cetera.

Just be sure you get your recommendations from people you can trust. Find out where did they get their science? Where is the research that supports the claims that the company is making? And if it sounds too good to be true, will you know exactly what comes next. It probably is. As always stick around here for more information on all

things designed to help you age better, live long and die short be well till next time peeps.