

### REASONS TO CONSIDER VITAMIN/MINERAL SUPPLEMENTATION

All human beings need adequate micronutrients (vitamins, minerals, enzymes and trace elements) for good health. Ideally, we would be able to obtain all the necessary micronutrients from a well balanced diet. However, the nutritional quality of the food in our world has been steadily declining, particularly in the last century. In the past, people ate foods that were whole, fresh, in-season and grown locally in nutrient-dense soil. Now, most foods are refined, preserved and grown in nutrient-depleted soils, making it difficult for us to get all the nutrients we need solely from food, no matter how “nutritious” our diet may seem.

Many genetic, environmental and lifestyle factors also contribute to *INCREASED* nutrient requirements in certain cases. Just as there is genetic variability in hair or eye color, there is genetic variability in our requirements for, and abilities to absorb and use, certain nutrients. Some of us need more of certain vitamins or minerals in order to maintain optimal health. Another factor that affects our nutrient levels and requirements is pollution. Pollutants, pesticides and toxins are an unfortunate reality of our environment and the body’s ability to protect itself from these substances is often dependent on nutrient status. Pollutants have also been shown to interfere with specific vitamins, such as B<sub>6</sub> and others, leading to an increased requirement so as to avoid deficiencies. Other factors including stress, activity level, medications and illnesses can elevate an individual’s requirements for vitamins and minerals.

Nutrients have also been shown to have many beneficial preventative and therapeutic actions in disease management. For some conditions, studies have shown that high doses of specific vitamins and minerals have effects comparable to, yet often less toxic than, prescription medications. Consult your physician for specific recommendations.

#### Summary of reasons to consider vitamin and mineral supplementation

1. To compensate for the declining nutrient content and increased refinement of our foods
2. To overcome increased nutrient requirements in some individuals due to genetic and biochemical individuality/variability, illness, pregnancy, high stress or high activity level
3. To counteract the deleterious effect of pollution and toxins (pesticides, environmental pollution)
4. To correct nutritional deficiencies induced by prescription drugs
5. To make use of direct therapeutic and health promoting effects of certain nutrients

#### Resources

1. LaValle, J.B. Natural Therapeutics Pocket Guide. 2000. Lexi-Comp. Hudson, OH. Pg. 680.
2. Wright, J.V. and Gaby, A. The Patient's Book of Natural Healing. 1999. Prima Health. Rocklin, CA. Pp. xii, 388.
3. Fairfield MD DrPh, K. and Fletcher MD MSc, R.H. “Vitamins for Chronic Disease Prevention in Adults”. JAMA 2002; 287: Pp. 3116-3126, 3127-3129.