

Health-Wise Vitamin & Mineral Chart

The foods we eat are incredibly important. The wrong ones can cause diseases, the right ones can help to protect against them. Whilst green leafy vegetables are amongst the most important foods, red and yellow foods such as tomatoes and peppers which are full of antioxidants should not be overlooked. The guide on the following pages details those vitamins and minerals important to a healthy diet. Also listed are many of the foods that contain them. That said, if you can manage to eat something from each of the following food groups every day, you can't go far wrong:

Cereals - Pulses, Nuts, Seeds - Fresh Fruit Fresh Vegetables - Soya Products - Oils & Fats

Take a look at how these food groups align with the vitamins and minerals below. We think you will find everything you need here to create mouth watering recipes for even the fussiest of pallets.

Vitamins

Vitamin A (Beta-Carotene) - Antioxidant. Bone & teeth development growth, tissue repair & vision. Green Leafy Vegetables, Watercress, Carrots, Sweet Potatoes, Red/Yellow Peppers, Tomatoes, Mangoes, Apricots, Romaine Lettuce, Pumpkins, Cantaloupe Melons.

B Vitamins (B1 Thiamin, B2 Riboflavin, B3 Niacin, B5 Pantothenic Acid, B6 Pyridoxine, Folic Acid, Biotin) - For the brain, heart, nerves. Absorption of energy, fats & protein & for blood formation. Broad Beans, Bananas, Avocados, Almonds, Brazil Nuts, Hazelnuts, Brewers Yeast, Peas, Wholegrains, Peanuts, Yeast Extract, Soya Meats, Mushrooms, Wheatgerm, Currants, Beansprouts, Green Leafy Vegetables.

Vitamin B12 - For nerve formation & cell production, allows us to use nutrients such as protein. Breakfast Cereals, Margarine, Yeast Extract, Fortified Soya Products, Nutritional Yeast Flakes.

Vitamin C - For healthy skin, gums and blood vessels. Important for a strong immune system. Parsley, potatoes, frozen peas, broccoli, cabbage, oranges and other citrus fruits, kiwi fruit, blackcurrants, green peppers and green leafy vegetables.

Vitamin D - Needed for healthy bones, Essential for the absorption of calcium and phosphate. Produced via exposure of the skin to sunlight. Can be obtained from fortified soya drinks, dairy-free margarine and breakfast cereals. The animal-free version is known as D2.

Vitamin E - Increases muscle strength and protects cells from damage.

Olive oil, wholegrains & wheatgerm, tahini (sesame seed paste), seeds, avocados, nuts (especially almonds and hazelnuts), tomatoes, red peppers.

Minerals

Calcium - important for strong bones and the correct functioning of muscles, nerves, the kidneys and heart.

Tofu, green leafy vegetables, wholemeal bread, nuts, seed and dried fruit are all good sources of calcium. Soya milks, breakfast cereals, non dairy margarine are all products which can be bought fortified with calcium.

Iodine - needed for the healthy functioning of the thyroid gland.

Can be bought as a food supplement in tablet form or natural rich sources are seaweeds such as kelp and hijiki. Powdered seaweed can be added when cooking.

Iron - needed for transporting oxygen and for the production of blood cells.

Figs, dried apricots, dates, green leafy vegetables, pumpkin seeds, tofu, beans and lentils.

Magnesium - important for bones and a healthy metabolism.

Broccoli, wholegrain bread, yeast extract, soya beans, green leafy vegetables, tofu, bananas, almonds and cashew nuts.

Potassium - for healthy functioning of the heart, brain and nerves, and for maintaining water balance and regulating blood pressure.

Brazil nuts, chickpeas, strawberries, bananas, oranges, pumpkin, potatoes and tomatoes.

Selenium - for immune function and to maintain healthy cells.

Pulses, nuts (especially Brazils), rice, beans, porridge oats, wholegrains.

Zinc - for a healthy immune system. Also promotes healing.

Baked Beans, lentils, wholegrains, brown rice, nuts, tofu, pumpkin, sesame seeds.