

Does my child need to use a vitamin or mineral supplement?

If your child is deficient in a vitamin or mineral this will have a negative impact on health and may also be detrimental to performance. In this case, increasing the intake of this nutrient will be beneficial. But if your child is not deficient, increasing the intake of this nutrient will most likely have no effect on health or performance. Unfortunately it is very difficult for parents to know whether your child is deficient or not.

In the absence of a diagnosed nutrient deficiency, a food first approach (rather than supplementation) is the preferred option. There are lots of vitamins and minerals and it becomes challenging to consider them all individually. Rather, it is currently recommended that your child consumes nutrient dense foods and a variety of foods. By doing this the broad range of nutrient requirements can be met for most athletes in most situations by food alone.

Parents are often concerned that their child may be deficient in vitamins and minerals due to low fruit and vegetable intake. However, although there are many benefits of consuming fruit and vegetables, a wide range of other foods can contribute substantially to vitamin and mineral intake.

Particularly rich sources of certain nutrients (per typical portion) are provided in the table on the following page. These nutrients have many roles in the body, and for ease these have been separated into bone health, energy metabolism, oxygen transport, and protection (i.e., antioxidants). Some exceptional sources that contribute to these four areas are:

- **Bone Health:** Salmon
- **Energy Metabolism:** Wholemeal pasta
- **Oxygen Transport:** White fish, salmon, beef/lamb, cows milk, eggs
- **Protection:** Sweet potato, watercress, broccoli, peppers, strawberries, orange

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Following on from the previous page, the table below indicates particularly rich sources of certain nutrients (per typical portion).

One tick is a good source, two ticks are a very good source, and three ticks are exceptional sources of the listed nutrient.

	Bone Health				Energy Metabolism					Oxygen Transport			Protection (Anti-oxidants)					
	Calcium	Phosphorus	Magnesium	Vitamin D	Thiamin	Riboflavin	Niacin	Pantothenic Acid	Vitamin B6	Iron	Folate	Vitamin B12	Vitamin A	Vitamin C	Vitamin E	Zinc	Selenium	Copper
Potato			✓		✓			✓			✓			✓				✓
Sweet potato			✓		✓			✓		✓			✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓			✓
Bread (wholemeal)		✓	✓		✓			✓		✓								✓
Pasta (wholemeal)		✓	✓		✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓		✓
Rice (brown)		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓							✓	✓		✓
Porridge oats		✓	✓		✓					✓								✓
Fortified breakfast cereals				✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓							✓
White fish		✓					✓					✓✓✓					✓✓	
Salmon				✓✓✓	✓		✓✓	✓				✓✓✓					✓	
Beef/lamb		✓				✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓		✓✓✓			✓✓	✓	✓	
Chicken		✓			✓		✓✓	✓	✓								✓	
Nuts		✓	✓															✓
Cows milk	✓	✓				✓		✓				✓✓✓						
Cheese	✓	✓										✓	✓					
Yogurt	✓	✓			✓	✓					✓							
Eggs		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓		✓	✓		
Baked beans		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓							✓
Spinach (baby)			✓							✓	✓✓		✓	✓				✓
Watercress										✓	✓		✓	✓✓✓				
Broccoli					✓						✓			✓✓✓				
Peas					✓						✓			✓				✓
Sweetcorn											✓			✓				
Butternut squash													✓✓	✓				
Carrots													✓✓✓					
Peppers (all)														✓✓✓				
Tomato														✓				
Strawberries										✓				✓✓✓				
Raspberries														✓✓				
Banana														✓				
Orange					✓									✓✓✓				