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## Top Vitamin and Mineral Deficiencies — Are You at Risk?

By Dr. Mercola | November 16, 2016

### 6 Most Common Vitamin and Mineral Deficiencies

Studies from both the U.S. and the U.K. suggest a majority of people fail to get certain key vitamins and minerals from food alone. Topping this list are vitamins D, E, A, C, magnesium and calcium.

Vitamin/Mineral	Food sources
✓ Vitamin D	Oily fish and mushrooms
✓ Magnesium	Oily fish; nuts, especially cashews and Brazil nuts; seeds; legumes; brown rice; raw cacao; avocados; seaweed and dark leafy greens like spinach and Swiss chard
✓ Vitamin C	Most fruits and vegetables, particularly citrus fruit, strawberries and kiwi
✓ Animal-based omega-3	Oily fish such as wild-caught Alaskan salmon, sardines and anchovies
✓ Vitamin K2	Fermented foods such as natto and fermented vegetables like sauerkraut; certain cheeses; raw butter and kefir made from raw milk
✓ Potassium	Beans such as white beans and lima beans; deep greens such as spinach and broccoli; sweet potatoes; fruits such as cantaloupe, oranges, red grapefruit, plums and bananas; avocados and nuts and seeds

Looking at this chart, it's easy to see where the majority of problems stem from: a lack of oily fish, nuts, seeds, fermented foods and fresh vegetables in the diet.

This chart also hints at important interactions between different nutrients. Vitamins, A, D, K2, magnesium and calcium, for example, work in tandem with each other. If one is lacking, it will affect one or more of the others.

## **The Importance of Magnesium**

Magnesium is the fourth most abundant mineral in your body, and researchers have detected more than 3,750 magnesium-binding sites on human proteins reflecting how important this mineral is for optimal biological functioning. The fact that magnesium is the third most common deficiency hints at the potential that magnesium deficiency might be involved in any health problem you may be experiencing.

Without sufficient amounts of magnesium your body simply cannot function at its best. Insufficient cellular magnesium levels set the stage for deterioration of proper metabolic function that can lead to more significant health problems. For example, magnesium plays an important role in:

- Your body's detoxification processes
- Preventing headaches
- Managing cardiovascular health
- Reducing insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome if you're at high risk. The mechanism by which magnesium controls glucose and insulin homeostasis appears to involve two genes responsible for magnesium homeostasis. Magnesium is also required to activate tyrosine kinase, an enzyme that functions as an "on" or "off" switch in many cellular functions and is required for the proper function of your insulin receptor.

## **Are You Getting Enough Magnesium?**

Experts estimate up to 80 percent of us are deficient in magnesium. Since there's no easily available commercial lab test that will give you an accurate reading of your magnesium status, the best way to evaluate your status is by tracking your signs and symptoms. In her book, "The Magnesium Miracle," Dr. Carolyn Dean lists 100 factors that will help you decide whether or not you might be deficient. **Mind Your Sodium**

### **to Potassium Balance**

Sodium and potassium are two other key nutrients that need to be in balance for optimal health. It's particularly important for heart health. In addition to getting too little potassium in their diet, most people also get too much sodium. If you eat mostly processed foods, you're virtually guaranteed to end up with this imbalance.

### **Potassium-Rich Foods Low in Sodium**

The best way to balance your sodium and potassium ratio is to increase your intake of foods rich in potassium, while maintaining a moderate amount of sodium intake. Whole foods naturally high in potassium and low in sodium include:

- White beans
- Spinach
- Sweet Potatoes
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Broccoli

- Cantaloupe

- Cherry tomatoes

- Blackberries

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Oranges

- Red Grapefruit

- Plums

- Prunes

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Raisins

- Bananas

- Artichokes

- Lima beans

- Acorn

squash

- Nuts and seeds

- Apricots

- Avocado

- Garlic