

## Comparing Multivitamins and Mineral Supplements

*Here are some tips for comparing multivitamin and mineral supplements.*

Believe it or not – most *general* multivitamins/mineral supplements are virtually all the same – with or without the fancy label or high price tag. A few pointers when selecting a general multivitamin/mineral supplement.\*

- Look at the percentages to see that they meet (but not overwhelmingly exceed) the Recommended Dietary Allowances.
- Check the additional ingredients: a *general* multivitamin and mineral shouldn't contain lots of extra herbal supplements, stimulants or added ingredients.
- Generic multivitamin/mineral supplements can be equivalent to the more expensive, name-brands. Read the label for ingredients and percentages.
- Respect the expiration date. Vitamins and minerals do lose potency over time.
- Follow the label's recommended dosages. Supplements are made differently and contain different doses per tablet/capsule.
- Women of childbearing age or planning to become pregnant may need a "pre-natal" multivitamin/mineral supplement, which contains higher levels of folate. The OB/GYN can provide a recommendation.
- Consult a healthcare professional or Registered Dietitian to ensure you won't be taking any nutrient (e.g. iron) inappropriate to your unique health status.

If you are on other medications and have known allergies, it is advised that you consult with your healthcare provider who can reference potential interactions between your medications and supplements.

Typically, a general multivitamin/mineral supplement will not cause adverse reactions when taken as recommended and as a compliment to an already healthy, balanced diet. However, when taking multiple supplements and medications, there is a potential for interactions. Whether to take a multivitamin/mineral is an individual choice – becoming informed is your best avenue to make sound choices.

\*Disclaimer: This information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to provide specific recommendations about supplementation or substitute for medical advice.

*References:*

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