

MORE IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER

Supplementing children's diets

More is not always better, especially when it comes to supplementing children's diets with vitamins.

Over-the-counter supplements can be potentially toxic and megadoses can be harmful, warns Dr. Kathleen J. Motil at the USDA's Children's Nutrition Research Center.

"Too much iron can be fatal, and there are cases where excess vitamin A and D can damage the kidneys, heart, and brain," said Motil, an assistant professor of pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine.

Vitamins are available in two forms: fat soluble and water soluble. Fat soluble vitamins

include A, D, E, and K. Water solubles include B-1, and B-2, niacin, B-12, and vitamin C.

Water soluble vitamins are especially absorbed by the intestinal tract and flushed out of the body during urination if not needed, Motil explained. Fat solubles, on the other hand, are more difficult to absorb and tend

to be stored in the body.

"The fat soluble vitamins are the worry," Motil said.

"Reactions vary from person to person. Some people are more sensitive to fat soluble vitamins."

In general, Motil believes that vitamins are unnecessary if a child is healthy and consumes a well-balanced diet.

She suggests the USDA's food guide pyramid as a

reference.

The pyramid recommends 2 to 3 servings a day from the milk group, 2 to 3 servings of meat, poultry, fish or eggs, 3 to 5 servings of vegetables, 2 to 4 servings of fruit, and 6 to 11 servings from the bread/cereal group.

"Even the most finicky eater will get enough vitamins and minerals with a varied diet including meat, dairy products, grains and fruits and vegetables."

There are exceptions, however. Motil believes supplements are appropriate for premature infants, children on

restrictive diets including vegetarian diets, and for children under the care of a physician for specific medical reasons such as a chronic illness, teen pregnancy, or eating disorders.

A pediatrician may also recommend a fluoride supplement, available alone and in combination with vitamins, if there is insufficient fluoride in the drinking water.

Motril urges parents to consult their pediatrician or a registered dietitian who specializes in children's nutrition if they are concerned about their child's eating habits.

HEALTH

Travel Medicine Briefs

Be careful with animals abroad

If you're traveling in a developing country, be wary of dogs. Though rabies can be carried by a variety of animals, dogs are still the chief carriers in less developed areas of the world. Rabies, a viral encephalitis transmitted by infected saliva, typically enters the body through a bite. The most important preventive measure for travelers is avoiding contact with animals, said Dr. Wayne J. Riley of the Travel Medicine Service at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Children playing outdoors should be cautioned not to pet stray animals or unfamiliar pets, he said. People who may be at risk should be vaccinated, and if infection is suspected, even those vaccinated must have series of post-infection injections, Riley said. The disease can also be transmitted by bats, skunks, cats and foxes.

Pack those sunglasses

When visiting sunny climates, don't forget the sunglasses.

During prolonged daily exposure to very bright sunlight,

sunglasses should block 92 to 97 percent of visible light and have side-shields, said Dr. Wayne J. Riley of the Travel Medicine Service at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. This is especially important in high-elevation snowfields and equatorial sand beaches. The side-shields prevent reflected ultraviolet and visible light from entering the eyes.

Riley warns, however, that such sunglasses may cause loss of visibility in dim light and can hinder recognition of traffic signals.

Watch out for hepatitis in Third World

Hepatitis, an infectious disease of the liver, is a significant danger for visitors to developing countries. Immunizations are available to prevent hepatitis A and B, said Dr. Wayne J. Riley of the Travel Medicine Service at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Hepatitis A infection results from contact with human feces directly or through contaminated water. It can also result from foods, such as shellfish taken
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Saturns Football Game of the Week

Friday 9/27 — Cimarron Memorial at Durango

Friday 10/4 — Bonanza at Cheyenne

Friday 10/11 — Rancho at Las Vegas

Friday 10/18 — Clark at Cimarron Memorial

Friday 10/25 — Green Valley at Chaparral

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Prostate

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have a high 10-year survival rate," said Dr. Peter Scardino, chairman of the Urology Department at Houston's Baylor College of Medicine, one of the study sites.

For men with prostate cancer that was early in its development and that had not spread beyond the prostate, 94 percent were still cancer-free 10 years after surgery. For those whose prostate cancer was more advanced, post-surgical cancer-free rates ranged from 77 to 80 percent.

"This study was particularly significant because it included long-term results from a large number of men in different parts of the world," Scardino said. "This clearly demonstrates that for

many radical prostatectomy can be a significant means of stopping prostate cancer in its tracks."

There are other ways to treat prostate cancer, Scardino said, but this study indicates that radical prostatectomy is an important treatment option.

Prostate cancer is the leading cause of cancer among men older than 50 and second only to lung cancer as a cause of cancer deaths. Prostate Cancer Awareness Week is organized by the Prostate Cancer Education Council, a consortium of physician, health educators and prostate cancer patient advocates dedicated to increasing prostate cancer awareness among men and the women in their lives.