EXTENSION
College of Agriculture, Biotechnology & Natural Resources

Vitamins: Where do you get them & what do they do?

	Food Sources	What the Vitamin Does for the Body
Vitamin A	**Animal sources:** Beef liver, fortified milk, dairy products, fish **Plant sources:** Sweet potatoes, carrots, cantaloupe, apricots, pumpkin, dark green leafy vegetables, broccoli, tomatoes	**Animal sources:** Important in eyesight, bone & tooth growth, reproduction and skin & hair **Plant sources:** Antioxidant (decreases the power of some harmful substances); helpful in the prevention of several chronic diseases
Vitamin D	Fortified milk, fish oils, high-fat fish, egg yolk; produced in the body by sunlight action on the skin	Essential for the maintenance and formation of bones & teeth; helps calcium to be absorbed
Vitamin E	Plant oils (vegetable oils, margarine, salad dressing, shortening), whole grain products, tomato products, green and leafy vegetables, nuts, seeds	Antioxidant (decreases the power of some harmful substances) helps form and protect red blood cells, muscles and other tissues
Vitamin K	Kale, collards, spinach, salad greens, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, mayonnaise, soybean and canola oil	Helps with bones; helps blood to clot
Vitamin B_1 (Thiamin)	Pork, ham, whole grains, fortified or enriched breads and cereals	Helps the body get energy from carbohydrates, proteins and fats
Vitamin B_2 (Riboflavin)	Dairy products, meats, fish, poultry, leafy green vegetables, fortified or enriched breads and cereals, broccoli, asparagus	Helps the body get energy from carbohydrates, proteins and fats
Vitamin C (Ascorbic Acid)	Peppers, citrus fruits, broccoli, strawberries, Brussels sprouts, papaya, tomatoes, cantaloupe, pineapple, potatoes, green leafy vegetables	Antioxidant; important for wound and bone healing; increases resistance to infection; increases iron absorption
Niacin	Meat, fish, poultry, enriched and whole grain products, fortified cereals, peanuts	Helps in fat metabolism and energy production
Folic Acid	Legumes, green leafy vegetables, enriched and whole grain products, fortified cereals, liver, orange juice, wheat germ, yeast	Necessary for the formation of red blood cells and protein metabolism; builds DNA
Vitamin B_6	Whole grain and fortified cereals, meat, poultry, fish, potatoes, whole grain products, bananas, nuts, seeds	Important for protein metabolism and absorption, nervous system function and red blood cell formation
Vitamin B_{12}	Animal products (meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, dairy products, eggs), fortified cereals	Essential for normal function of all cells–especially nerve cells, red blood cells and gastrointestinal cells

Minerals: Where do you get them & what do they do?

	Food Sources	What the Mineral Does for the Body
Calcium	Milk, cheese, yogurt & other dairy products, calcium-fortified juices, calcium-fortified cereals and breads; dark leafy greens, broccoli, sardines and salmon with bones, tofu prepared with calcium, legumes, almonds, lime-processed corn tortillas	Builds bone & teeth; maintains normal muscle action, normal nerve behavior and blood clotting; important in regulating blood pressure
Chromium	Whole grain products, broccoli, brewer's yeast, seafood, meat, potatoes	Necessary for normal carbohydrate, protein and fat breakdown
Copper	Beef liver, seafood, nuts, seeds, whole grains, legumes	Part of many enzymes; helps the body use iron
Fluoride	Fluoridated drinking water, tea, coffee, grains, legumes, leafy vegetables	Essential in the formation of bones & teeth; reduces tooth decay and bone loss
Iodine	Iodized table salt, seafood	Important in the production of thyroid hormones
Iron	Fortified cereals & breads, clams, liver, red meat, whole or enriched grains, dark green vegetables, legumes, black-strap molasses	Carries oxygen to the cells, helps in the immune system, necessary for energy use
Magnesium	Whole grains, green leafy vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes, chocolate	Essential in muscle action, nerve function, energy production and bone formation
Manganese	Whole grains, cereals, legumes, nuts, fruits, vegetables	Part of many enzymes
Molybdenum	Legumes, whole grains, nuts	Necessary part of many enzymes
Phosphorous	Yogurt, cheese, eggs, milk, meat, fish, poultry, whole grain bread, legumes, nuts	Important for bone & teeth; energy; normal fluid balance and DNA formation
Potassium	Fruits, vegetables, legumes, fresh meat, milk, yogurt, most unprocessed foods	Important in muscle contraction & formation, heart and kidney function; water balance
Selenium	Brazil & other nuts, seafood, fish, poultry, meat, whole grains	Antioxidant; works with vitamin E to fight cell damage
Sodium	Table salt, processed foods, smoked & salted meats & fish, fast foods, salted snacks, canned soups	Helps maintain normal fluid balance; helps with nerves and control of muscle contraction
Zinc	Oysters, fortified ready-to-eat cereals, red meat, shellfish, legumes	Important in the formation and breakdown of carbohydrate, protein and fat, and DNA)

Adapted from Wilson, M. and Scott, B. (2004). An Apple A Day: Valuing Vitamins (UNCE Fact Sheet 04-55) and An Apple A Day: Minding Your Minerals (UNCE Fact Sheet 04-52).