

Dear Maria

My friend says that I need a B vitamin, which one do I need?

You haven't said why you were recommended a B vitamin and which one.

The B's come as a complex, although separate ones are available as needed.

Some come with a number such as B6, or B1. Others are known by name such as folic acid and Biotin. The interesting thing about the B vitamins is that they are synergistic, meaning that when taken together as in a Vitamin B complex formula, they are more potent when they are used separately.

The B's are water soluble, any excess is excreted and not stored in the body therefore they must be replaced daily. This means that they can be relatively safe to take.

Despite all the talk about vitamins, not many are known for what they are or why they are so important. Their name comes from *vita* (life) plus *amine* (the chemical compounds originally thought to be vitamins). Vitamin research goes on, yet we know that vitamins are organic substances, meaning that they are substances that occur naturally only in living things, plant or animal. They exist in foods in minute quantities and are absolutely necessary for proper growth and the maintenance of health. Plants manufacture their own, animals and humans generally get theirs from plants they eat although some vitamins can be made in their bodies.

In nature you will never find one vitamin alone, they always come packaged with other vitamins. When and as the need arises, the nutritional therapist may suggest an additional vitamin on top of a multivitamin and mineral supplement to address a particular need.

So yes, we all need vitamins, be they the B's or any of the others such as vitamin C, the E vitamins, vitamin D's and A's and K's.

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