

National Nutrition Month Week 3

By Chef Jen, RDN, LDN, RYT-200

In 2019, the vitamin and supplement industry made ~ \$31 billion that year⁽¹⁾ and that number has been increasing every year. While there is nothing wrong with taking a multivitamin, vitamins or herbal supplements, it's important to realize that you should be trying to get these nutrients via whole foods first. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics supports this statement and highlights it for National Nutrition Month with the theme **"Personalize Your Plate"**.

Here's an example:

If you are lacking Iron, then you should increase those foods higher in iron (beef, chicken, seafood, beans, spinach, etc.) and eat foods that help with the absorption of that nutrient. For example, Vitamin C increases the uptake of iron in the body. Pair it with bell peppers, strawberries, oranges, kiwi, broccoli, tomatoes or kale.

Whole foods and others that we eat, contain the nutrients we need. Then if you cannot eat certain foods for nutrients you need or if you are medically diagnosed as deficient, then a supplement or multivitamin is recommended. For overall health as a dietitian, I only suggest vitamin B12 supplements for VEGANS, as it is a *necessary* vitamin for your body.

Back to building your plate:

Here are some ideas that the Academy (and myself) recommends:

1. Make informed food choices and develop sound eating and physical activity habits you can follow all year long.²
2. Obtain nutrients primarily through food, because multivitamin and mineral supplements are not scientifically proven to prevent disease. They can benefit those who are unable to meet vitamin and mineral requirements through food or have been diagnosed with a deficiency.²

Again, your plate may have to be completely different from your family, neighbor or lunch buddy. There is no "one plate fits all" for each person. You have to eat for you. But, each plate should consist of 50% plants (veggies, fruits, legumes, pulses, tubers), 25% grains (more plants!), 25% protein and/or dairy products. Below is the graphic from [MyPlate.gov](https://www.myplate.gov)



Remember.....

Choose Well, Eat well, Try a New Food, Be Active and Bon Appetit!

~ Chef Jen



1. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/235801/retail-sales-of-vitamins-and-nutritional-supplements-in-the-us/> Accessed 3/11/2021

2. <https://www.eatrightpro.org/media/press-releases/national-nutrition-month/nnm-2021-vitamins-and-minerals> Accessed 3/11/2021