What's The Scoop? Questions and Answers about Probiotics & Multivitamins

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What's the Scoop? Questions and Answers About Dietary Supplements

I have irritable bowel syndrome and have heard that probiotics could help my symptoms. Should I take a probiotic supplement?



Taking probiotics might slightly reduce the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome, a common disorder that causes stomach pain, bloating, diarrhea or constipation, and other symptoms. But it is important to know that more studies are needed to confirm this finding and identify which types of probiotic supplements are most effective.

For more information, see our fact sheet on <u>probiotics</u> and talk to your health care provider for advice.

I read a recent article about multivitamins that said these supplements do not help you live longer. Is there any reason to take a multivitamin?

You are probably referring to a recent study from the NIH National Cancer Institute that looked at multivitamin use by U.S. adults. The study found that taking daily multivitamins does not lower the risk of death, nor does it affect the risk of dying from heart disease, cancer, or cerebrovascular diseases.

However, multivitamins can help people get recommended amounts of nutrients when diet alone is not enough. In addition, some vitamins and minerals in multivitamins can be beneficial at certain times. For example:

- <u>Vitamin B12</u> is recommended for people over 50 and those who follow a vegan diet.
- Folic acid is recommended before and during early pregnancy.
- Age-Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS) supplements can help some people with age-related macular degeneration.
- <u>Multivitamins</u> might help older adults maintain or enhance cognitive function.

Talk to your health care provider about whether a multivitamin is right for you. For more information, see our fact sheet on multivitamins.



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¿Habla español?

Consulte <u>nuestra información basada en la ciencia</u> para ayudarle a tomar las mejores decisiones para su salud con respecto al uso de suplementos dietéticos.

Do you or someone you know prefer to get health information in Spanish? See our science-based dietary supplement information in Spanish.



Have more questions about dietary supplements? Send your questions to ODS:

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About ODS

The Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS) is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the nation's medical research agency—supporting scientific studies that turn discovery into health.

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