

## Vitamins are a waste of money, say scientists

Researchers warned people to stay clear of supplements, which are taken by one in three people in Britain



Supercharging our immune systems with supplements seems to be a national obsession, with £36 million spent annually on vitamin C alone, according to the NHS

By Alice Philipson

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Vitamin pills are a waste of money and offer no health benefits, a group of leading scientists has said.

Researchers declared “case closed” on supplements, while one academic suggested they could even be harmful by creating false worries about illnesses which cannot be cured.

They warned people to stay clear of the pills, which are taken by one in three, because Western adults are typically well-nourished and rarely require additional vitamins, reported The Times.

Writing in the journal *Annals of Internal Medicine*, academics from the John Hopkins University School of Medicine and the University of Warwick said evidence suggested that “supplementing of well-nourished adults ... has no clear benefit and might even be harmful.”

The statement coincided with the release of some of the world’s most comprehensive research into vitamin supplements involving half a million people.

One study analysed 24 previous trials involving 450,000 people and found no beneficial effect on mortality from taking vitamins.

The second examined 6,000 elderly men and found taking pills had no positive effect on cognitive decline after 12 years.

The third piece of research followed 1,700 men and women with heart problems and discovered no benefit in those who had taken supplements.

The studies lead the academics to conclude the use of most supplements should be avoided.

They wrote: “These vitamins should not be used for chronic disease prevention. Enough is enough.”

Around one in three British adults take some form of nutritional supplement. Multivitamins are the most popular followed by vitamin C.

Edgar Miller, of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, in Baltimore, Maryland, said: “There are some that advocate we have many nutritional deficiencies in our diet.

“The truth is, though we are in general overfed, our diet is completely adequate.”

It comes a week after scientists from the International Prevention Research Institute in Lyon found low vitamin D levels are a consequence rather than a cause of ill health.

The findings lead to fears that the NHS could be wasting £80 million a year prescribing vitamin D for diseases like Cancer, Parkinson’s and diabetes.

Doctors currently believe that Vitamin D has a role in disease prevention and promotes the uptake of calcium and bone formation.

But Public Health England is reviewing its recommendations for vitamin D which are expected to be

published next year.

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