SUPPLEMENTS: ARE THEY RIGHT FOR YOU?

Supplements such as vitamins, minerals, herbs, fiber, and amino acids are generally meant to provide nutrients that we don’t get in our daily diet, to help improve your overall health. Some may even help manage health conditions.

If you’re wondering if supplements are right for you, it’s important to remember that they should only “add to” (or “supplement”) your healthy diet. You can’t rely on supplements to make up for unhealthy eating or to substitute the vital nutrients found in fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

Most children and adults can maintain the nutrients needed for good health with a daily multivitamin. However, some people who have specific nutritional needs (such as bone, liver or skin health issues, or building immunity) may benefit from supplements, particularly those who are:

- pregnant/of childbearing age
- over age 65
- vegetarian/vegan
- strict dieting/avoiding certain food groups
- diagnosed with deficiencies, allergies or intolerances
- eating a lot of processed and fast foods

Where to Start

If you’re interested in taking dietary supplements, the first place to start is a healthy, balanced diet. Then, talk to your doctor about your specific needs, especially if you are pregnant, nursing or have a chronic medical condition such as diabetes, hypertension or heart disease. Some dietary supplements (such as St. John’s wort and vitamins C, E and K) can cause adverse side effects when combined with prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Ensuring Safety

The safest way to purchase supplements is from a reputable vitamin or health food store, or from a health practitioner. Quality does matter, so read the ingredients and warnings on the label and learn about the manufacturers. Also, look for a seal of approval from an organization that

continued on page 2
tests supplements such as the U.S. Pharmacopeia or NSF International.

For more information and supplement fact sheets, visit the National Institute of Health’s Office of Dietary Supplements website. You can also search the Mayo Clinic website database to learn how supplements work for various health conditions and recommended dosage for adults and children. Be sure to consult your health care professional before taking any dietary supplements.

Resources: WebMD.com; MayoClinic.com; NIH.gov

DOWNLOAD THE FLORIDA BLUE MOBILE APP!

Take your health information on the road with the Florida Blue mobile app for your tablet or smartphone (iPhone® and Android®). Quickly access your plan and deductible, view your prescriptions and claims, find a doctor and more! Wherever you are - whenever you need it.

Download the free Florida Blue app from the iTunes App Store, Google Play or Amazon Apps.

FLORIDA BLUE MEMBER, ROY STRIPLIN, TALKS ABOUT HIS PERSONAL HEALTH JOURNEY.

I met Laura Asta, a Florida Blue nurse educator, at an employee health screening last September. While I had previously been diagnosed with hypertension (high blood pressure), my reading was extremely high that day. I made an appointment to see my doctor, and thanks to Laura (who is now my personal health coach) I’m making healthy lifestyle choices, and feeling great.

During our sessions, Laura and I discovered that after my wife started working again, our life changed quite a bit due to her new schedule. I was eating more frozen meals — which tend to be higher in sodium than fresh foods — and we stopped taking our regular evening walks. I also drank a lot of soda, and virtually no water.

I knew I had to make some changes. Laura helped me see that I needed to increase my HDL (or “good cholesterol”) by adding more fruits and vegetables to my diet and being more physically active. Following Laura’s advice, my wife and I began making healthier meals together before work in the mornings, and now I’m drinking a lot more water. My wife and I also walk on the weekends when we’re both home, and I’m focusing on building my exercise intensity and frequency.

Today, I monitor my blood pressure frequently and it has dropped considerably since September. I continue to meet with my personal health coach to help maintain these positive changes. I’m happy to report that I’m feeling extremely well and motivated to stay on this healthy course!
Reducing that daily soda may lower your calorie intake, though you may not need to remove it completely. Soda and many other beverages are sweetened to improve their flavor. The sweetener used in the majority of regular sodas is high fructose corn syrup. Sugar (sucrose) is the sweetener present in approximately 5% of all the sweetened beverages in the U.S. When looking for ways to lower calories, assess all of your food and beverage choices. Aim to achieve your daily need of water, fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy and protein first. If your calorie needs have not been met, then there may be room for the calories from soda or other treats occasionally.

References: CDC.gov, WebMD.com

Q: I am currently trying to lose weight but I love my afternoon soda. Will removing my daily soda help me shed pounds?

A: Reducing that daily soda may lower your calorie intake, though you may not need to remove it completely. Soda and many other beverages are sweetened to improve their flavor. The sweetener used in the majority of regular sodas is high fructose corn syrup. Sugar (sucrose) is the sweetener present in approximately 5% of all the sweetened beverages in the U.S. When looking for ways to lower calories, assess all of your food and beverage choices. Aim to achieve your daily need of water, fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy and protein first. If your calorie needs have not been met, then there may be room for the calories from soda or other treats occasionally.

References: CDC.gov, WebMD.com

MASHED POTATOES WITH CAULIFLOWER
Make a higher-nutrient side dish by blending mashed cauliflower with mashed potatoes -- all dressed up with seasonings and even a sprinkling of reduced-fat cheddar, if you like.

Ingredients
2 large baked potatoes, peeled and cut into pieces
2 cups steamed or microwaved cauliflower florets, cooked just until tender
1/2 cup reduced-fat sharp cheddar cheese, grated (optional)
2/3 cup low-fat milk, (fat-free half-and-half can be substituted)
use more if needed
1-2 sprinkles paprika or garlic powder (optional)
salt and pepper, to taste

Directions
1. Put hot potato pieces, cauliflower florets, and grated cheese in a large mixing bowl. Beat on medium-low speed until nicely mashed. Pour in milk, and continue to beat until blended. Add a tablespoon or two more of milk if needed for desired consistency.
2. Add a touch of salt, pepper, and garlic powder or paprika to taste.

Nutrition Information: Makes 4 Servings; Calories 140, Protein 5 g, Carbohydrates 30 g, Dietary fiber 4 g, Fat 0.7 g, Saturated fat 0.3 g, Mono Fat 0.2 g, Poly Fat 0.2 g, Cholesterol 12 mg, Sodium 51 mg, Calories from Fat 4%

Recipe courtesy WebMD.com

Log in at FloridaBlue.com and visit our Health & Wellness section for more healthy recipes from WebMD.

Florida Blue is a trade name of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Inc., an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. All materials, content and forms contained in this newsletter are the intellectual property of Better You from Blue and may not be copied, reproduced, distributed or displayed in full or in part without expressed written permission by Better You from Blue.