

# Supplements...Do Kids Need Them?

---

## Foods first!

Meals and snacks can provide all the vitamins and minerals most children need. That's the best way to get them! If the Pyramid guides your child feeding, you can relax. Your child likely won't need a supplement.

Foods are the best sources of nutrients anyway. (For you, too.) Foods have nutrients for growing kids that vitamin and mineral supplements don't have.



## Check first...

Talk to your child's health care provider before you give your child a vitamin or mineral supplement – or take one yourself. That way you won't put your child or yourself at risk. A vitamin or mineral supplement may not be necessary, or safe either. Children with a food allergy and those who are vegetarians might need a vitamin or mineral supplement.

## If your child's health professional recommends a supplement:

- Get what's advised. One with enough vitamins and minerals, not too much. That may be a supplement for children, not adults.
- Give only the dose directed by your doctor or health care provider. Giving your child more is not better. More can be dangerous!
- Know the amount of nutrients taken daily from vitamin or mineral supplements. Combine that with the amount from enriched or fortified foods.
- Teach your child that supplements are not candy – even if the names, shapes, and colors are fun.
- Store all supplements out of reach. Keep them in a container with a childproof cap. Reminder: An adult iron supplement can be poisonous for your child!



**Find out more from:** *Tips For The Savvy Supplement User: Making Informed Decisions and Evaluating Information*, at the Food and Drug Administration webpage at [www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/ds-savvy.html](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/ds-savvy.html)

# Supplements...Do Kids Need Them?

---

## Read Supplement Facts!

**Serving size.** It's really the dose. If your child's doctor advises a supplement, be sure to ask about the type to buy and amount to give.

**Other ingredients.** Supplements may have other ingredients, such as a coloring or flavoring. A list is on the bottom of the label.

If you take a dietary supplement, check to make sure you choose a vitamin or mineral supplement. Be cautious about other supplements and herbal products.

## Use Supplement Facts to:

- Know the nutrition in one serving, or tablet.
- Pick the supplement advised for your child.
- Give your child the amount recommended by your doctor.