



BalanceHealthSM Newsletter

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Minerals 101

Last month we discussed the extremely important role that vitamins play in our overall health. This month we will tackle minerals! There are 16 minerals that are an essential part of a healthy diet. Nutritionists classify minerals as either macrominerals or trace minerals. Macrominerals, which include electrolytes and are also called major minerals, are needed in fairly substantial amounts, while trace minerals are only needed in minute portions, but are still vital to the body's overall health.

Let's review the 16 essential minerals, starting with macrominerals:

Calcium

This mineral is famous for strengthening bones and teeth, but is also needed to help regulate heartbeat and help muscle and nerve function. Calcium deficiency can lead to osteoporosis, back pain, brittle bones and fractures. Sources of calcium include dairy products, green leafy vegetables, salmon, almonds, and tofu.

Phosphorus

This is another important mineral involved in the formation and maintenance of strong and healthy bones and teeth. It also supplies energy to cells and is needed to absorb a number of vitamins. Sources of phosphorus include fish, poultry, meat, nuts, dairy products, seeds, and whole grains.

Magnesium

This mineral is essential for controlling muscle and nerve function, maintaining a normal heart

rhythm and blood clotting. Research has asserted that magnesium can protect the heart, lower high blood pressure, and can even ease asthma attacks and PMS in women. Magnesium deficiency can be very serious and include symptoms such as increased risk of heart disease, irregular heartbeat, confusion and muscle cramps. Sources of magnesium include green leafy vegetables, shellfish, nuts and bananas.

Sulfur

This mineral is needed to form proteins in the body. It is also great at eliminating toxins from the body. A sulfur deficiency is very rare as sources include all animal and plant proteins including meat, poultry, and beans.

Sodium

Also known as salt, sodium gets a bad name for increasing blood pressure; however sodium in conjunction with potassium is vital for regulating the fluids in the body. In excess, salt can raise blood pressure leading to serious health concerns. Sodium is found in salt, dairy products, shellfish, processed meats, and many packaged foods and store bought soups.

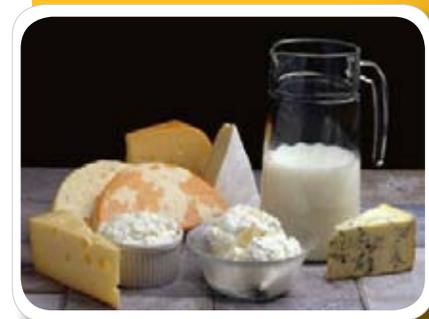
Potassium

In addition to helping regulate fluids in the body, potassium also helps to maintain a regular heartbeat and low blood pressure and enables glucose in the body to be converted to glycogen. Sources include

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avocados, bananas, oranges, potatoes, nuts, and poultry.

Chloride

This mineral is required for the formation of acids in the stomach as well as regulating fluid in all blood vessels and cells. Sources include table salt and other sodium containing foods.

Now let's take a look at the trace minerals:

Iron

This mineral helps the blood and muscles transport oxygen throughout the body. Iron can prevent fatigue, protect against illness and promotes healthy looking skin. Sources include organ meats, beef, shellfish, molasses, and green leafy vegetables.

Zinc

Zinc is crucial to a healthy immune system. It is also necessary for a healthy reproductive system and even helps treat problems such as fatigue, skin problems, and sore throat. Sources include oysters, red meat, eggs, shellfish, cheese, and beans.

Iodine

This mineral plays a major role in the manufacturing of certain hormones produced by the thyroid gland, that are responsible for regulating metabolism, converting fats into energy and stabilizing blood cholesterol levels. Sources include table salt and seafood.

Selenium

This mineral is an antioxidant that fights free radicals, which helps fight cancer and heart disease. Sources include seafood, eggs, dairy products, citrus fruits, avocados and lentils.

Copper

Copper helps to form collagen, which is essential for healthy bones and connective tissue. It is also important for the production of red blood cells and is needed to absorb iron more easily. Sources include shellfish, garlic, bananas, mushrooms, cocoa, tomatoes, and whole grains.

Manganese

This mineral is important for the protection of the body's cells particularly against damage from free radicals. It is also required for the process of metabolism and digestion and helps to break down fats and cholesterol. In addition, manganese is also vital for the formation of healthy bones and tissues. Manganese deficiency can lead to digestive problems, dizziness and loss of hearing. Sources include nuts, brown rice, cereals, and whole grains.

Fluoride

This mineral helps make bones and teeth stronger and helps to prevent cavities and tooth decay. A lack of fluoride will lead to tooth decay. Sources include toothpaste, tea, some tap water, and salmon.

Chromium

This mineral stabilizes blood sugar levels and increases good cholesterol, while helping to lower bad cholesterol. Chromium deficiency can lead to the onset of diabetes, raise cholesterol levels, and may lead to heart disease. Sources include mushrooms, whole wheat bread, egg yolks, red meat, cheese, and shellfish.

Molybdenum

This mineral helps cells and nerves to function. Sources include organ meats, whole grains, yeast, and leafy green vegetables.

Remember that your wellness coach is available to help you design a nutrition plan that is full vitamins and minerals or give recommendations on recipes that are rich in particular nutrients.

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