



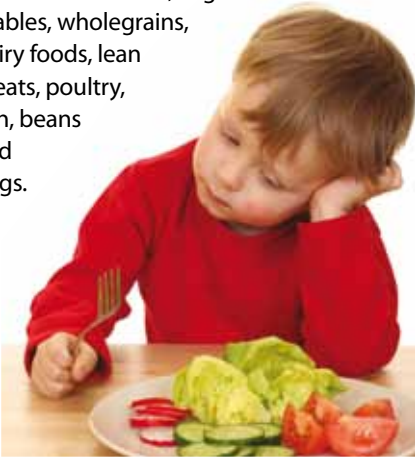
# Children's Health

## Does my child need vitamins?

Most children who take vitamin and mineral supplements do **not** need them, according to a recent, large American study. Healthy children who eat a varied diet and spend a little time in the sun each day will get all the vitamins and minerals they need.

A supplement is not a substitute for a balanced diet. Whole foods are the best source of vitamins and minerals (e.g. iron and calcium) and also provide a range of other nutrients such as anti-oxidants and fibre.

Give your child a wide variety of healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, wholegrains, dairy foods, lean meats, poultry, fish, beans and eggs.



### Who needs a supplement?

Children who may benefit include:

- **Vegetarians.** Some vegetarian diets miss out on important nutrients, especially calcium, iron, zinc, vitamin B12.
- **Fussy eaters.** An unbalanced diet may be lacking in essential nutrients.
- **Children on a restricted or 'elimination' diet for food allergy or intolerance.**
- **Children with certain medical conditions e.g. eating disorders, cystic fibrosis, coeliac disease, liver disease, epilepsy.**

### The risks of supplements

While vitamins and minerals are essential for good health, too much can be harmful. For example, in high doses, vitamin C can cause kidney stones, vitamin B6 can damage nerves and vitamin D can stunt growth.

Large doses of some supplements can cause nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. Megadose vitamin treatment (very high doses) is particularly dangerous.

A child formulation of a general multivitamin or mineral supplement is preferred in most cases. Speak to your GP if you think your child may need a supplement.

## SURGERY INFO

### HOUSE CALLS

We are happy to visit you at home if you are too sick to come to the surgery. Please ring 9123 4567 before 10 am if possible so house calls can be made at lunchtime.

### AFTER-HOURS

When the surgery is closed, please ring the Westside Medical Service on 9999 1234 and a doctor will visit you at home.

### OUR PRACTICE

Our friendly reception staff, Melissa (Practice Manager), Jane and Margaret, are available to make bookings or help in any way.

All patient information and medical records are kept strictly confidential.

### TELEPHONE CALLS

You can contact your doctor by ringing during surgery hours. Emergency calls will always be put straight through.

### SERVICES

As well as routine consultations, the following services are available:

- Home visits
- Family planning, Pap smears, Pregnancy tests, Ante-natal care
- ECG: heart check
- Spirometry: lung test
- Counselling
- Vaccination: children and travel
- Blood tests
- Minor surgery: stitching cuts, removing moles, skin cancers
- Liquid nitrogen 'freezing' therapy for sunspots and warts
- Sports medicine
- Spinal manipulation

### FEES

All eligible patients are bulk-billed for surgery consultations. Please bring your Medicare card with you to the surgery.

## Nut allergy on the rise

Peanut allergy has doubled in the last 5 years and now affects 1/50 infants. Tree nut allergy (e.g. almonds, brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, walnuts) is also increasing.

Fortunately the majority of allergic reactions to nuts are mild, causing swelling of lips/face/eyes, hives, abdominal pain and vomiting.

However, serious reactions (**anaphylaxis**) can occur. Symptoms include difficult or noisy breathing, swelling of the tongue or throat, difficulty talking, hoarse voice, wheeze, cough, loss of consciousness and collapse.

### Living with nut allergy

Nuts are widely used in cooking and can be hard to avoid. In some cases even trace amounts can trigger symptoms.

- **Children should take their own nut-free food to school and not swap/share food.**
- **Always check food labels. Laws require foods which contain nuts to indicate this.**

- **Become familiar with high-risk foods.**
- **Be cautious with any food that you have not prepared yourself.**
- **Ring restaurants before dining out. Don't rely on the menu. Speak to the manager.**
- **Notify the parents of your child's friends if your child is visiting or staying over.**

However, even with the greatest care, a nut-allergic person will have an accidental exposure every few years. Know in advance what to do if this occurs. Ask your GP for an ASCIA Action Plan

for Anaphylaxis. If your child has an adrenaline autoinjector, make sure it is always available wherever your child goes.

[www.allergy.org.au](http://www.allergy.org.au) [www.allergyfacts.org.au](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au)

