



Your guide to vitamins

Australian daily intakes and everyday food sources

Vitamins support normal energy metabolism, immunity, blood formation and bone health. A varied diet is the starting point; supplements may be useful when your individual needs have been assessed.

Understanding daily vitamin intakes

The tables use Australian and New Zealand Nutrient Reference Values (NRVs). Values are for healthy adults aged 19-50, unless stated. They describe usual daily intake, not a prescribed supplement dose. ^[1,2]

RDI = recommended dietary intake. **AI** = adequate intake, used when an RDI cannot be set. **mcg** = micrograms; **mg** = milligrams.

The B vitamins

Vitamin	Main roles ^[1]	Food examples ^[1]	Daily intake ^[2]
B1 Thiamin	Helps release energy from food and supports nerve function.	Wholegrain bread, pork, legumes, seeds.	RDI Men 1.2 mg Women 1.1 mg
B2 Riboflavin	Supports energy metabolism and antioxidant enzymes.	Milk, yoghurt, eggs, almonds, mushrooms.	RDI Men 1.3 mg Women 1.1 mg
B3 Niacin	Helps the body use carbohydrate, fat and protein.	Chicken, fish, meat, peanuts, wholegrains.	RDI Men 16 mg NE Women 14 mg NE
B5 Pantothenic acid	Supports energy metabolism and production of fats and hormones.	Chicken, eggs, oats, potatoes, avocado.	AI Men 6 mg Women 4 mg
B6 Pyridoxine	Supports neurotransmitters, haemoglobin and protein metabolism.	Fish, chicken, potatoes, bananas, legumes.	RDI Both 1.3 mg
B7 Biotin	Helps process fats, carbohydrate and amino acids.	Cooked eggs, salmon, avocado, wholegrains.	AI Men 30 mcg Women 25 mcg
B9 Folate	Needed for DNA and red blood cells; vital in early pregnancy.	Leafy greens, lentils, beans, fortified bread.	RDI Both 400 mcg DFE
B12 Cobalamin	Supports nerves, DNA and red blood cells.	Fish, meat, eggs, dairy, B12-fortified foods.	RDI Both 2.4 mcg

NE = niacin equivalents, including niacin made from tryptophan. **DFE** = dietary folate equivalents, which account for differences in absorption of food folate and folic acid.



Vitamins A C D E and K

Food sources and Australian adult daily intakes

Vitamin	Main roles ^[1]	Food examples ^[1]	Daily intake ^[2]
Vitamin A	Supports vision, immunity and normal cell growth.	Eggs, dairy, fish; carrots, pumpkin, sweet potato and leafy greens supply carotenoids.	RDI Men 900 mcg RE Women 700 mcg RE
Vitamin C	Supports collagen formation and antioxidant protection; helps absorb plant iron.	Capsicum, kiwifruit, oranges, berries, broccoli.	RDI Both 45 mg
Vitamin D	Helps absorb calcium and phosphorus and supports bones and muscles.	Oily fish, eggs, vitamin D-fortified foods. Skin also makes vitamin D from sunlight.	AI Both 5 mcg (200 IU)
Vitamin E	Protects cell membranes from oxidation and supports normal immune function.	Almonds, sunflower seeds, vegetable oils, avocado.	AI Men 10 mg alpha-TE Women 7 mg alpha-TE
Vitamin K	Needed for normal blood clotting and activation of certain bone proteins.	Kale, spinach, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, vegetable oils.	AI Men 70 mcg Women 60 mcg

RE = retinol equivalents. Australian RE and US retinol activity equivalents (RAE) use different conversions for plant carotenoids; they are not interchangeable. **alpha-TE** = alpha-tocopherol equivalents. For vitamin D, 1 mcg = 40 IU.

Vitamin D and safe sun exposure

Food provides only part of our vitamin D. Follow Australian sun safety advice and use sun protection when the UV Index is 3 or higher. If you have limited sun exposure or are at risk of deficiency, discuss assessment and supplementation with your medical professional. Prolonged unprotected sun exposure is not recommended. ^[5]

Build variety into your meals

Choose foods from all five food groups across the day: vegetables and legumes, fruit, mostly wholegrain cereals, lean protein foods, and milk, yoghurt, cheese or suitable alternatives. Check labels for added vitamins; plant milks are not automatically fortified with B12 or vitamin D. ^[3]

Simple meal ideas

Breakfast: oats with milk or a suitable fortified alternative, berries and nuts.

Lunch: a wholegrain sandwich with egg or chicken and salad.

Dinner: salmon or lentils with brown rice and mixed vegetables.

Snack: fruit and yoghurt or a small handful of nuts.

Australian research

A 2024 Australian food analysis found kale, baby spinach and Brussels sprouts were particularly rich in vitamin K1. This supports including varied green vegetables; it does not establish a treatment benefit or a supplement dose. ^[7]



Needs across adult life stages

Australian daily intake values for pregnancy and breastfeeding

This table covers adults aged 19-50. Teenagers have some different values and need age-specific advice. These are RDI values unless marked AI. ^[2]

Vitamin	Pregnancy	Breastfeeding
A	800 mcg RE	1,100 mcg RE
B1	1.4 mg	1.4 mg
B2	1.4 mg	1.6 mg
B3	18 mg NE	17 mg NE
B5 (AI)	5 mg	6 mg
B6	1.9 mg	2.0 mg
B7 Biotin (AI)	30 mcg	35 mcg
B9 Folate	600 mcg DFE	500 mcg DFE
B12	2.6 mcg	2.8 mcg
C	60 mg	85 mg
D (AI)	5 mcg (200 IU)	5 mcg (200 IU)
E (AI)	7 mg alpha-TE	11 mg alpha-TE
K (AI)	60 mcg	60 mcg

Planning pregnancy

Australian guidance recommends a daily 400 mcg folic acid supplement from at least one month before conception and during the first three months of pregnancy, alongside folate-rich foods. This is separate from the dietary folate RDI above. Some people need a higher prescribed dose; discuss this with your medical professional. ^[4]

Older adults

Vitamin B6: from age 51, RDI is 1.7 mg for men and 1.5 mg for women.

Vitamin D: AI is 10 mcg (400 IU) at ages 51-70 and 15 mcg (600 IU) after age 70.

Vitamin B12: RDI remains 2.4 mcg, but reduced absorption can increase the need for assessment and a suitable fortified food or supplement plan. ^[1,2]

An intake target is not a treatment dose

Australian NRVs guide healthy populations. Deficiency, digestive conditions, restricted diets and medicines can change what is appropriate. In Health can help review your food intake and supplements alongside care from your medical professional.



Using supplements thoughtfully

Practical safety notes and references

Check before adding a supplement

Bring a list of your medicines and supplements to your appointment. Include multivitamins, magnesium products, powders and energy drinks so we can check overlapping ingredients. A larger dose is not automatically more helpful.

Vitamin B6: supplemental B6 can cause nerve damage. Check every label, including magnesium and multivitamin products. If tingling, burning or numbness develops in your hands or feet, stop the B6-containing products and seek medical advice promptly. ^[6]

Pregnancy and vitamin A: avoid high-dose retinol supplements unless specifically prescribed. Discuss any vitamin A product with your pregnancy care team. ^[2]

Vitamin K and warfarin: keep vitamin K food intake consistent and check with your prescriber before changing your diet or adding vitamin K supplements. ^[1]

Vitamin B12: vegan diets need a reliable B12 source from fortified foods or supplements. Ask for an individual plan rather than relying on unfortified plant foods. ^[1]

About the source material

Adapted and rewritten by In Health from the Linus Pauling Institute handout Micronutrients for Health: The Vitamins (updated August 2024; supplied as “2026 Linus Pauling Inst.pdf”). Functions and food examples draw on that resource. Australian NRVs replace its US and institute-specific intake advice, including its higher vitamin C, vitamin D and older-adult B12 recommendations. This handout is not endorsed by the Institute.

References

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4. Healthdirect Australia. Planning for your pregnancy. [Australian preconception guidance](#).
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6. Therapeutic Goods Administration. Are you unknowingly taking too much vitamin B6? 4 March 2026. [TGA vitamin B6 safety information](#).
7. Dunlop E, Cunningham J, Adorno P, Dabos G, Johnson SK, Black LJ. Vitamin K content of Australian-grown horticultural commodities. Food Chemistry. 2024;452:139382. doi:10.1016/j.foodchem.2024.139382. [Australian vitamin K food study](#).

Sources checked 30 September 2026. Vitamin B6 NRV revisions are currently in draft; this handout uses published values. General education for adults; personalised advice may differ.