

US Adults Spend More than \$35 Billion on Supplements in 2021

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Supplement /'səpləmənt/ (Noun) a type of pill that contains vitamins, nutrients, etc.
Example: She is drinking several supplements to keep her skin young and youthful looking.
2. Cardiovascular /,kɑrdēō'vaskyələr/ (Adjective) relating to the heart and blood vessels
Example: She exercises for an hour everyday to improve her cardiovascular health.
3. Asbestos /as'bestəs,az'bestəs/ (Noun) a material previously used in construction that has since been found to be dangerous to human health
Example: Asbestos was used for pipe insulation
4. Nutrient /'n(y)ōōtrēənt/ (Noun) any substance that helps humans and animals grow
Example: The plants need all the nutrients they can get.
5. Deficiency /də'fiSHənsē/ (Noun) the state of not having enough of something that is needed
Example: The patient is suffering from iron deficiency so the doctor gave her a prescription.
6. Chronic /'krānik/ (Adjective) continuing for a long time or happening often
Example: He is constantly complaining about his chronic back pain..



More than half of US adults take supplements such as multivitamins — spending more than \$35 billion on them in 2021, according to a report by supplement maker Vitality Pro. But are they worth the money?

Doctors from the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago say that most people's time and money would be better spent eating a healthy diet and exercising. A review of 84 studies completed by the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) in June 2022 did not find enough evidence for or against multivitamins and other supplements reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer — which cause about half of all US

deaths each year. And no cardiovascular or cancer benefit was found in taking vitamin E, while one type of supplement, beta-carotene, was found to actually increase the risk of lung cancer among people who smoke or are exposed to asbestos at work.

In response to the USPSTF report, Dr. Jeffrey Linder of the Feinberg School of Medicine says that people are "wasting money and focus thinking there has to be a magic set of pills that will keep them healthy." Instead, he says people should just eat healthily and exercise. Writing in JAMA, Linder and two Feinberg colleagues also explained that whole fruits and vegetables contain vitamins, chemicals, fiber and other nutrients that probably work together to benefit health. While supplements may contain the same vitamins, without the other elements they may have a different effect on the body.

However, for people with certain vitamin deficiencies, taking supplements can be helpful, they wrote. They also note that folic acid and iron are recommended for pregnant women and women who are planning to start a family. The USPSTF has also recommended vitamin D and calcium supplements to reduce the risk of fractures. However, the USPSTF report notes that its general advice on supplements is not meant for pregnant women and potential mothers, children, people in the hospital or those with chronic illnesses.

DISCUSSION

1. What are your thoughts on the findings of this study?
2. Are dietary supplements popular among people in your country?
3. Are there any health-related products you believe are a waste of money?
4. What are your favorite fruits and vegetables? How often do you have them?
5. What forms of exercise do you enjoy most?