

# TOP 5 SUPPLEMENTS

for women over 40



# Why do we need to supplement?

Although there is no substitute for healthy food, modern life means that we don't necessarily get all the nutrients we need, even if our diets are super healthy.

There are many reasons why:

- 1. Nutrient poor diets** – our diets are often high in refined carbohydrates, sugar, trans fats and food chemicals, and lacking in nutrient rich fruit, veg, whole foods and healthy fats.
- 2. Soil quality** – today's soils are often depleted of minerals. A study done in 2003 found that compared to the 1930's, the fruit and vegetables we eat contain 20% fewer minerals (zinc and calcium were around 50% lower).
- 3. Pesticides** used to grow crops can affect the nutrient content of the food.
- 4. Food miles** – long distance transportation of foods depletes nutrient content.
- 5. Processing** – the adding of preservatives and additives can decrease nutrient quality.
- 6. Stress** – adrenal stress can deplete certain nutrients, leaving us needing additional supplies.
- 7. Poor digestion** – ageing, food sensitivities, inflammation and infection can all affect absorption of vital nutrients.
- 8. Climate & Culture** – it's virtually impossible to get enough Vitamin D if you live in a country with very little sunshine through the winter (like the UK). It's also difficult to obtain if you cover yourself up, stay in the shade or slap on factor 50!
- 9. Peri-menopause** – as hormones start to decline and fluctuate, our nutrient needs ramp up, and at the same time our absorption capacity can decline.
- 10. Medications, smoking, alcohol and caffeine** – can all deplete the body of essential nutrients.

So for me, we all need a basic level of supplements, and if we have any particular deficiency or health condition we may need specific nutrients, which is why it's so important to work with a qualified practitioner who can advise you.



This is why I use supplements, which do exactly as they name implies, they supplement a balanced diet and are not a replacement for it. It can be likened to building a boat with rotten wood and using the best screws that money can buy. It may hold together, but it will leak. Therefore, if we choose poor quality foods, the body will not be working optimally even with the best supplements.

The range of supplements available can be overwhelming, with some of them making great claims. Some preparations contain cheap forms of vitamins and minerals that the body may not be able to absorb very easily. Also, they often contain contaminants or cheap fillers and some have added sugar or sweeteners. A good quality supplement contains nutrients in the correct balance, and in the best most absorbable form.

As we age, our needs for certain nutrients increase. As women, we also need nutrients for our hormones to work properly.

From my clinical experience, as a general rule these are my top 5 essential supplements for women over 40 (depending on your circumstances):

## ① A GOOD QUALITY MULTIVITAMIN

This is your basic insurance policy! But I don't recommend any old multi from your supermarket. You must look for good levels of B vitamins and minerals, as these are critical in maintaining good hormone function.

These are the ones I most often recommend:

Life Extension Two per Day capsules

Biotics Research Equi-Fem

Nutri Women's multi

## ② VITAMIN D3

Most people know that vitamin D is essential for healthy bones, and is therefore important for preventing osteoporosis and osteoarthritis. However, recent research has suggested that vitamin D can also provide protection from diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, depression, and cancers of the breast, prostate, and colon.

Unless you live in year round sunshine, you will need a vitamin D top up.

It's very important to get yourself tested to see where your levels are before supplementing. You can do this through your own doctor or health

practitioner, or you can order an inexpensive home test kit from a reputable source. If you live in the UK, this is one that I use regularly: [Vitamin D Home TEST](#).

Vitamin D doesn't work alone though. It needs the other fat soluble vitamins to help it to function properly. Here's a formula that I like: [Allergy Research Vitamin D3 Complete](#)

### ③ OMEGA 3 FISH OIL

The omega 3 and 6 fats are critical for the structure of our cell membranes and reducing inflammation. They therefore play important role in reducing the risk of arthritis, heart disease and brain and mood disorders. We tend to get lots of Omega 6 fats from animal foods and vegetable oils, and not enough Omega 3 fats, found in oily fish.

So unless you are eating oily fish at least 3 times a week, you are likely not getting enough omega 3 fats.

There are many fish oils out there, but many are contaminated with heavy metals or have gone rancid. It's really important to buy a good quality brand. Here are some of my favourites:

[Nordic Naturals ProEPA](#)  
[Nutri Eskimo Brainsharp](#)  
[Biocare Mega EPA](#)  
[BioNutri Fish Oil DHA 5:1 EPA](#)

### ④ MAGNESIUM

This critical mineral is actually responsible for over 300 enzyme reactions and is found in all of your tissues -- but mainly in your bones, muscles, and brain. You must have it for your cells to make energy, for many different chemical pumps to work, to stabilise membranes, and to help muscles relax. And it gets used up really quickly if you're stressed!

There are many different ways of increasing your magnesium:

- [Epsom Salts](#) – magnesium sulphate salts are great if you don't like taking pills. Put a couple of handfuls in a warm bath and relax for 20 minutes.

- Magnesium oil – you can rub this into your skin
- Magnesium Glycinate – a good all round supplement

## ⑤ VITAMIN C

This vitamin is one vitamin we can't make ourselves (we're in the minority in the animal world here). It's not just for your common cold. It really is vital for your whole immune system. It's anti-bacterial, anti-viral and anti-fungal, and provides you with vital anti-oxidant protection against DNA damage and arterial damage. Vitamin C also gets depleted very quickly when there's any stress about, so make sure you are taking more when you're stressed.

You can get vitamin C everywhere. It's normally comes as 'ascorbic acid', but if you have any digestive sensitivity to it you can take it as a mineral ascorbate (eg. magnesium or calcium ascorbate).

So that's my top 5 supplements for women over 40. Of course there are lots more out there that are helpful for specific therapeutic uses, but these are my basics.

*If you're going it along, you need to be very careful – the supplement market is a minefield. Just because something is marketed as 'healthy' does not mean it's any good for you! Get advice from someone qualified. You may be doing more harm than good.*

### SOURCES:

White, P.J., Broadley, M.R. (2005) Historical variation in the mineral composition of edible horticultural products. J. Hort. Sci. Biotechnol. 80:660–667  
 S. Johnson. 2001. The multifaceted and widespread pathology of magnesium deficiency. Med Hypotheses 56(2): 163-70  
 Noreen et al., (2010) Effects of supplementary fish oil on resting metabolic rate, body composition and salivary cortisol in healthy adults. J Int Soc Sports Nutr;7:31.  
 Oliver Gillie (Editor) SUNLIGHT, VITAMIN D & HEALTH - A report of a conference held at the House of Commons in November 2005, organised by the Health Research Forum Available as a free download from <http://www.healthresearchforum.org.uk>  
 Padayatty SJ, Katz A, Wang Y, et al. Vitamin C as an antioxidant: evaluation of its role in disease prevention. J Am Coll Nutr. 2003 Feb;22(1):18-35.

*The information in this presentation is for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for medical advice. You should consult with a doctor or healthcare professional before taking any new supplements, especially if you have or suspect you have a health condition or you are on medication.*