



# The Be Fit Minute

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## HOW TO FIND NUTRITION, NATURALLY

We hear a lot about the importance of eating a balanced, nutrient-rich diet. Minerals like calcium and iron are talked about often: but what about other key nutrients? Where are they found? And why do we need them?

### **BALANCED DIET BASICS:**

- The term “nutrients” includes both vitamins and minerals. No nutrient is more essential than another, so it’s crucial to consume a variety of foods. They all have important jobs and often work together.
- Live vibrantly. Eat different colored plants every day. Ideally, at every meal.
- Choose whole grains, like oats, barley, and whole wheat. They have more vitamins and minerals than refined grains, e.g. white flour.

### ***Vitamins and Minerals***

#### **VITAMIN K**

Leafy greens (such as kale, collards, spinach, beet and turnip greens), cabbage, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, parsley and peas

**Its job:** It helps your blood clot properly. If you are deficient you may bruise and bleed easily.

#### **VITAMIN E**

Seeds, nuts, plant-based oils and leafy greens

**Its job:** It helps protect your cells from damage and may reduce your risk of being sickened by disease. It also widens blood vessels and helps prevent blood from clotting inside them (which can be deadly).

#### **VITAMIN D**

Salmon, trout, halibut, sardines, fortified milk and yogurt

**Its job:** It aids in the absorption of calcium and keeps bones and teeth strong. It also helps your immune system stay healthy.

#### **VITAMIN A**

Red peppers, sweet potatoes, carrots, leafy greens, mango, papaya, squash, apricots, cantaloupe, watermelon, eggs and liver

**Its job:** It keeps eyes and skin healthy. It also helps your body fight off bacteria and viruses.

#### **VITAMIN B (includes thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, folate, biotin, B<sub>6</sub> and B<sub>12</sub>)**

Beef, pork, chicken, fish, seafood, dairy, eggs, whole grains, seeds, beans, mushrooms and leafy greens

**Its job:** It is necessary to make new cells and keep them healthy. It is also needed to break food down into usable parts.

#### **VITAMIN C**

Citrus fruits, peppers, papaya, strawberries, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, kohlrabi, mango, kiwi, melons, tomatoes and potatoes

**Its job:** It protects your cells from damage from the sun and from pollution. It also helps your cuts heal and your body absorb iron.

#### **POTASSIUM**

Tomatoes, oranges, potatoes, beans, leafy greens, milk, yogurt, pumpkin, rutabaga, bananas, papayas and figs

**Its job:** It is needed for muscle contractions: including your heart beating properly. It is also important for digestion.

#### **PHOSPHOROUS**

Milk, fish, poultry, red meat, milk, cheese, yogurt, whole grains and soy beans

**Its job:** It helps your body use protein and carbohydrates for energy and aids in the building of protein to help your cells grow and repair. (It works with B vitamins too.)

#### **MAGNESIUM**

Whole grains, leafy greens, soy, beans, nuts, seeds and dates

**Its job:** It is needed for over 300 chemical reactions in the body. It keeps your heart beating and your brain and nerves functioning.

#### **ZINC**

Oysters, crab, red meat, beans and nuts

**Its job:** It is needed to support muscle growth. It is also crucial for your immune system and to help cuts heal.