

Nutrient	Chief Functions	Important Sources
Protein	Provides nitrogen and amino acids for body proteins (in skin tissues, muscles, brain, hair, etc.), for hormones (substances that control body processes), for antibodies (which fight infections), and for enzymes (which control the rates of chemical reactions in our bodies).	Milk, cheese, yogurt, eggs, fish, poultry, soybeans, lean meats, wheat germ, nutritional (brewer's) yeast, and certain vegetable combinations.
Fats	Provide concentrated source of energy. Carry certain fat-soluble vitamins (notably A, D, and E) and essential fatty acids. Provide insulation and protection for important organs and body structures.	Whole milk, most cheeses, butter, margarine, nuts, oils (preferably unsaturated, unhydrogenated).
Carbohydrates	Keep protein from being used for energy needs, so protein can be used primarily for body-building functions. Also necessary for protein digestion and utilization. Provide our main source of energy. Provide the glucose vital for certain brain functions.	Fruits, vegetables, whole-grain bread, cereals, grains.
Vitamin A (fat-soluble). Extra vitamin A is stored in the liver—that is why animal livers are such a good source.	Helps to resist infection. Helps eyes to adjust to changes from bright to dim light (prevents night blindness). Needed for healthy skin and certain tissues, such as the lining of the eyes and lungs.	Liver, whole milk, fortified margarine (A is added), butter, most cheeses (especially Swiss and Cheddar), egg yolks, dark green and yellow vegetables (especially carrots, parsley, kale, and orange squash), apricots.
Vitamin D (fat-soluble).	Needed for strong bones and teeth (regulates calcium and phosphorus in bone formation). Essential for calcium absorption from the blood.	Sunlight shining on bare skin, vitamin D-fortified milk, fish-liver oil, sardines, canned tunafish.
Vitamin E (fat-soluble).	Helps preserve some vitamins and unsaturated fatty acids (acts as an antioxidant). Helps stabilize biological membranes.	Plant oils (especially wheat-germ oil and soybean oil), wheat germ, navy beans, eggs, brown rice.
Vitamin C or ascorbic acid (water-soluble). C is easily destroyed by air and heat. Like many other water-soluble vitamins, it is <i>not</i> stored in the body, so we need some every day.	Needed for healthy collagen (a protein that holds our cells together). Helps wounds to heal. Needed for normal blood-clotting and healthy blood vessels. Needed for iron absorption. Spares or protects vitamins A and E and several B vitamins. Needed for strong teeth and bones.	Citrus fruits, green and red peppers, green leafy vegetables, parsley, tomatoes, potatoes, strawberries, cantaloupe, bean sprouts (especially mung beans and soybeans).
B vitamins (water-soluble) include thiamine (B ₁), riboflavin (B ₂), niacin, pyridoxine, folic acid, cobalamin (B ₁₂), cholene, etc.	Needed for steady nerves, alertness, good digestion, energy production, healthy skin and eyes, certain enzymes involved in amino-acid synthesis, maintenance of blood.	Whole-grain breads and cereals, liver, wheat germ, nutritional yeast, green leafy vegetables, lean meats, milk, molasses, peanuts, dried peas and beans.
Folic-acid deficiency is common during pregnancy. It may also be caused by birth-control pills.		
Riboflavin is destroyed by sunlight, so use milk containers that keep out light.		

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Fatigue, tension, depression are often signs of a B deficiency.		
Calcium	Needed for building bones and teeth, for blood-clotting, for regulating nerve and muscle activity, for absorbing iron. Calcium is more easily digested when eaten with acid foods (such as yogurt or sour milk).	Whole and skim milk, buttermilk, cheese, yogurt, green vegetables, egg yolk, bone-meal powder, blackstrap molasses.
Phosphorus	Needed to use protein, fats, and carbohydrates, to transform energy in the body. Makes up part of all the body's cells. Needed for building bones and teeth.	Milk, cheeses, lean meats, egg yolks.
Iron	Makes up an important part of hemoglobin, the compound in blood that carries oxygen from the lungs to the body cells. Daily intake is important. Children, teen-agers, pregnant and menstruating women are especially likely to have iron deficiencies.	Lean meat, liver, egg yolk, green leafy vegetables, nutritional yeast, wheat germ, whole grain and enriched breads and cereals, soybean flour, raisins, blackstrap molasses.
Iodine	An important part of thyroxine; helps the thyroid gland regulate the rate at which our bodies use energy. Affects growth, water balances, nervous system, muscular system, and circulatory system.	Iodized salt, seafoods, plant foods grown in soil near the sea.
Magnesium	Required for certain enzyme activity. Helps in bone formation.	Grains, vegetables, cereals, fruits, milk, nuts.
Potassium	Needed for healthy nerves and muscles.	Seafood, milk, vegetables, fruits.
Sodium, chlorine, fluorine, and other trace minerals.	Varying functions, many of them not well understood. Fluorine is especially important from birth to six months. It helps to prevent tooth decay by hardening tooth enamel.	Meat, cheese, eggs, seafood, green leafy vegetables, fluoridated waters, sea salt.
Water	Not really a nutrient, but an essential part of all tissues. Most people need 6-7 glasses of fluid (water, tea, juice, etc.) a day to keep good water balance in the body.	
Roughage (cellulose)	Also not a nutrient, but important for stimulating the intestinal muscles and encouraging the growth of certain intestinal bacteria. Keeps teeth clean and gums healthy.	Fruits, vegetables, whole-grain bread and cereals.

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