

# WHAT ARE VITAMINS ANYWAY?

What are vitamins anyway? Have you ever wondered what a vitamin even is? You may have heard the terms “macronutrient” and “micronutrient” but what do they actually mean?

Nutrition is essential to every single one of our lives as it is the process of taking food and utilizing it for growth, metabolism, and repair. Nutrients found in the foods we eat are divided into two categories:

## 1. MACRONUTRIENTS

### • CARBOHYDRATES

- Carbohydrates are sugars, starches, and fibers
- This is your body and brain's main source of energy
- 1 gram of Carbohydrate = 4 calories

### • FATS

- Fats are another source of energy and essential for brain development, cell functioning, protect your organs, and help your body absorb certain vitamins
- 1 gram of Fat = 9 calories

### • PROTEIN

- Essential for repairing and regenerating body tissues/cells, make enzymes that aid in digestion, blood clotting, muscle contraction, maintaining proper pH, manufacturing hormones
- 1 gram of Protein = 4 calories

## 2. MICRONUTRIENTS

### • VITAMINS

- A,C,D,E,K, and 8 B vitamins

### • 2 TYPES OF MINERALS

- 1. Major Minerals

- Calcium, phosphorus, potassium, sulfur, sodium, chloride, magnesium,

- 2. Trace Minerals

- Iron, zinc, copper, manganese, iodine, selenium, molybdenum, chromium, and fluoride.

- Minerals play an important role in maintaining blood pressure, fluid/electrolyte balance, bone health, delivery of oxygen to cells, muscle/nerve function

You probably noticed that macronutrients are measured in grams because our bodies require a larger amount in comparison to micronutrients. However, just because we measure micronutrients in micro- or milligrams because our bodies do not require as much does not mean they are any less important. Micronutrients are what we need to help our bodies digest the macronutrients. When you eat something you are simply consuming vitamins that plants and animals created or minerals they have absorbed.

### SO WHAT IS A VITAMIN???

- We can not create vitamins in our bodies, meaning it must be obtained through our diet.
- A vitamin can be divided into 2 types:

## 1. WATER SOLUBLE VITAMINS

- Vitamin B, C

- These types of vitamins are readily absorbed by the body for immediate use because they cannot be stored in the body because they are excreted out in the urine meaning they need to be replenished regularly through our food intake

## 2. FAT SOLUBLE VITAMINS

- Vitamin A, D, E, K

- Stored in the fatty tissues meaning they can be stored in the body for longer periods of time and can be saved to be consumed later
- Better absorbed if eaten with fat

Now that we have established a fundamental understanding of nutrition and the difference in nutrients I look forward to discussing with you all about each vitamin's role in our metabolism and what vitamins are found in certain foods through the next following weeks.

With Warm Regards,  
Kristia Bondoc  
Email: [eastbay@ACOE.org](mailto:eastbay@ACOE.org)