

An Enhanced View of Vitamin E

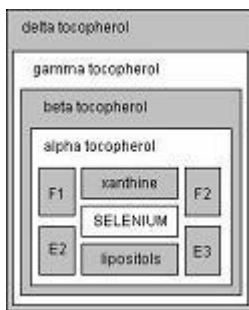
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Lynn Mayer, MA, CNC

I spoke at the library earlier this month about the immune system. In my talk I shared some diagrams of the Vitamin E and Vitamin C complexes as they occur in nature. I spoke as to how man has taken these complexes apart and even though we have called these random parts “vitamins”, the body doesn’t use these fractionated elements in the same way. That is why synthetic vitamins and high dosage anti-oxidants are having a poor performance in clinical studies as to their long term beneficial effect on health.

Several people asked for copies of the diagrams so as to help in their understanding as well as to assist them in passing on the learning to their loved ones. Although I have written on fractionated vitamins before, I thought I would share the diagrams here in the column. We can all benefit from the repetition and the deeper understanding.

This week: Vitamin E



This is the vitamin E complex as it occurs in nature. The tocopherols are part of the complex, but only the outside layer, the anti-oxidant portion which acts to protect the whole complex. There are, however, other essential elements to vitamin E. As with all vitamin complexes, whole vitamin E contains a host of synergistic factors.

F1 represents unsaturated fatty acids. F2 represents phospholipids such as lecithin, the nutrient needed for cholesterol metabolism and cancer protection. Phospholipids are also necessary for myeline sheath production. This sheath is the protective outer layer of your nerves cells and fibers. I would consider this a very important nutrient to have included in your vitamin E. The E2 portion is the oxygen conservation factor such as is helpful in angina. E3 is the fraction that acts as a hormone precursor and protection against gastric inflammation. Every vitamin complex also has a trace mineral at its core which activates the complex. Selenium is the trace mineral activator in the vitamin E complex.

The vitamin E complex loses as much as 99 percent of its potency when these phospholipids and other synergistic factors are removed. If you are using just the tocopherols as your source of E, you are missing all of these other critical and necessary factors.

The whole vitamin E complex has a host of functions in the body. Among its many roles, it is necessary in female and male reproductive systems, including hormone production and uterine health, maintenance of mental alertness, in growth and vigor, skin and hair health, in prevention of abnormal cell growth and muscle wasting as well as in the protection from effects of toxins such as mercury. Most importantly, the whole vitamin E complex facilitates cholesterol transport and metabolism. (My pondering...could the consumption of only the tocopherols and not the whole vitamin E in our vitamin supplements be playing a part in our cultural cholesterol imbalance?)

When taken out of context, for example taking just the anti-oxidant portion of the tocopherols in high dosages has been shown to raise blood pressure, cause gastrointestinal distress, disturb iron metabolism and cause allergic-type symptoms.

Even Denham Harman, MD, PhD, the father of the free radical theory in 1954, when interviewed, admitted to taking only a small amount of the separated anti-oxidants such as the tocopherols. "I'd take more, but I can't afford to be fatigued". He went on to explain that taking too many anti-oxidants can cause fatigue and muscle weakness.

The whole natural vitamin E complex on the other hand assists in balancing blood pressure, supports the repair, health and function of the gastro-intestinal tract and supports red blood cell formation involved in iron metabolism.

I encourage you to read your supplement labels carefully. Use caution if the source of the vitamin E is only the tocopherol or mixed tocopherol portion of the vitamin E complex. Use whole foods as the source of your vitamin E.

Good sources of the whole E complex are unrefined vegetable and seed oils (two thirds of the vitamin is lost during production of and refining of commercial oils), whole grains, wheat germ oil (the part of the wheat grain discarded in the making of white flour), green leafy vegetables, egg yolk, butter, nuts, sunflower seed, peanut butter, prunes, liver, asparagus, broccoli, sweet potatoes, corn, barley and avocado. Bon appetite!

Next column: the Vitamin C diagram and all of its whole food benefits.

Lynn Mayer is a Certified Nutrition Consultant and Health Coach here in Telluride, Colorado. Lynn is available for consultation in person, by phone 970 369-4790 or through her website www.thejoyofhealth.com.