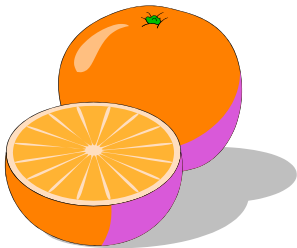


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Vitamin C: Ascorbic Acid

Vitamin C (its chemical name is ascorbic acid) is a water soluble nutrient. Early sailors discovered that if they could replenish their fresh fruits at tropical islands, they could avoid the bleeding gums, loose teeth, anemia, and skin bruises characteristics of scurvy. Scurvy is a Vitamin C deficiency but is rarely seen in America. The Recommended Daily Allowance of 60 mg a day is easily met by eating a well-balanced diet.



Despite repeated attempts, carefully controlled studies have not been able to show that Vitamin C megadoses have any significant effect in preventing or curing the common cold.

Vitamin C also plays a role in wound healing, resistance to infection, metabolism, and the body's ability to properly absorb iron. It is an antioxidant used by manufacturers to help maintain food quality. It also functions in the body as an anti-oxidant to neutralize destructive molecules known as "free radicals."

Vitamin C is water-soluble so steam vegetables. It is also lost to air exposure so cover food well to preserve the vitamin.

It is recommended that you eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day and at least one from a Vitamin C source.

GOOD SOURCES OF VITAMIN C		
Food	Amount	Vitamin C mg
Kiwi Fruit	1 med	75
Orange Juice	6 oz.	72
Cantaloupe	1 c	68
Green Pepper	½ c	64
Fresh Strawberries	½ c	37
Broccoli, Frozen	½ c	37
Cauliflower	½ c	34
Baked Potato w/Skin	1 med	26
Fresh Tomato	1 med	22
Cabbage	½ c	18

Vitamin C may cause nausea and diarrhea if taken in large doses. It is an acid, which may cause irritation to the stomach. As with all nutrients, megadoses should be avoided.

Let's see how much you know about Vitamin C

- Vitamin C megadoses are helpful in preventing, but not curing the common cold.
- Exercise increases the bodies need for Vitamin C.
- It is harmless to take large doses of Vitamin C because the body takes what it needs and excretes the rest.
- Potatoes are a good source of Vitamin C.
- Vitamin C helps in dietary iron absorption.

	True	False
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

ANSWERS: (1) False. Repeated attempts of scientific studies have not been able to show Vitamin C preventing or curing the common cold. (2) False. (3) False. There are harmful affects from megadoses of Vitamin C or any other nutrient. (4) True. One medium potato offers about one-third of the daily requirement. (5) True

Food and Nutrition Services can assist in providing nutrition information. Call 703-813-4800 and ask for a Registered Dietitian.