In our previous article we talked about macronutrients(Fat, Carbs, and Protein) which are required in large amounts by our body. Although micros are equally important for proper body function they are required in less quantity than macros. In our community, we often heard people saying this food or that food has vitamins. They might not be technically correct, but it shows that they are somehow aware of the importance of micronutrients in the body.

Micronutrients consist of the various vitamins and minerals group having specific functions in the body.

Vitamins and minerals are essential nutrients for our body as they play a major role in brain development, growth, immune functions, and many other important functions.

Vitamins are made by plants and animals which can be broken down by heat, acid, and air. On the other hand, mineral exists in soil or water and can't be broken down.

Now, let's get familiar with why do our body needs micronutrients, some of the essential functions of various vitamins and minerals in our body so that we can organize our eating habits, more healthily.

**Vitamins:** Vitamins are essential for our body for functions like energy production, vision improvement, bone growth, and more. Vitamins can be further divided into 2 categories as fat-soluble and water-soluble.

Fat-soluble vitamins do not dissolve in water, they are absorbed more when consumed with the source of fat. Fat-soluble vitamins are stored in the liver and fatty tissues after the absorption to be used in the future when required. Vitamins A, D, E, and K fall into the category of fat-soluble vitamins.

Some important functions of various fat-soluble vitamins:

Vitamins A: Necessary for proper vision, supports cell growth, and immune function.

Vitamins D: Promotes proper immune function and assists in calcium absorption and bone growth.

Vitamins E: Assists immune function and act as an antioxidant that protects cells from damage.

Vitamins K: Helps in bone development and in regulating blood calcium levels. It also plays a role in blood clotting(thickening of the blood).

**Minerals:** Minerals are inorganic compounds that exist in soil or water and are required by our body for various functions such as providing energy, assisting in bones and teeth development.

Minerals can be further divided into 2 categories as:

1. Macrominerals: required more

2. Trace minerals: required less.

i. Macrominerals and their functions:

Calcium, phosphorous, magnesium, sodium, chloride potassium and sulfur belongs to the category of macrominerals.

Calcium assists in bones and teeth function and also helps in muscle function and blood vessel contraction, whereas magnesium assists in better metabolism by assisting in enzyme reaction. Similarly sodium and potassium help in balancing the fluid status in cells and maintenance of blood pressure.

ii. Trace minerals and their functions:

Iron, Manganese, Copper, Zinc, Iodine, Selenium falls in the category of trace minerals.

Iron helps in providing oxygen to muscle, whereas manganese assists in the metabolism of amino acids, carbohydrates, and cholesterol. In addition to that, zinc is necessary for immune function, and wound healing and Iodine assists in thyroid regulations.

We are now familiar with what micronutrients are and some of their important functions in our body. Now let's see what are some common foods from which we can get these mentioned vital nutrients.

Bottom line: Most of the foods we eat contain valuable nutrients. For example, having pumpkin seeds would help us get both minerals and vitamins from our diet. As micronutrients are required in very little amount, avoiding junk foods and focusing on whole food would give us almost every vitamins and mineral we need because every food we saw on the list above are easily available and are also frequently consumed food in our society in day to day manner. Managing food from different categories might help us reach our health and fitness goals.