

Vitamins and Minerals

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When I was in college, our athletic trainer recommended that all athletes should take vitamin C because they helped strengthen the immune system. So I started taking them. After that I started hearing about multivitamins and figured how could they hurt. I started taking them. Every so often when I felt what I thought was unusually tired, I would take vitamin B and/or iron tablets. When I was in my fifties I occasionally had slight discomfort in my right knee. It has never hurt a lot and it never slowed me down. But when I heard that glucosamine and chondroitin (G&C) helped with joint discomfort, I decided to take these tablets too. I continued taking suppliments well into my sixties even though I could not say for sure if they helped. Every once in awhile I would have slight stomach discomfort. I had recommended G&C to a friend who tried them and later reported that he thought they upset his stomach. About 10 years ago after considering my friend's comments and my own stomach discomforts, I decided not only to stop taking G&C but also vitamin C and the multivitamin tablets too. Also, I haven't taken vitamin B or iron since then. This was about the same time I started running ultramarathons. My stomach felt better and my energy level didn't seem to change. I continue to eat three well balanced meals a day.

In 2010 I was running the Canandaigua 50 mile run for the first time. At about the 30 mile mark my legs started cramping. Luckily a crew person who was helping other runners noticed my discomfort and suggested I take some Saltsticks. She gave me one to take then and a few to take over the next few miles. They worked like magic. At the 35 mile mark I was running well and I finished strong. Later I read that Saltsticks contain magnesium, potassium, calcium, sodium, and vitamin D. I think my diet has plenty of calcium, sodium, and vitamin D but probably doesn't have enough magnesium and potassium. So to suppliment the good meals that I eat, I take a magnesium tablet (250 mg) and a potassium tablet (595 mg) almost every day. And during an ultramarathons I take a saltstick every hour or so.

I am not a nutrition expert by any means. I am simply presenting my thoughts on the subject. Nancy Clark's book "Food Guide for Marathoners" has been helpful for me and I would be very happy to read your comments and suggestions, so please send them.