



4 Essential Cornerstone Supplements

I have a very strict criterion for this list; my feeling is that nothing is a good fit for everyone. I have been asked repeatedly for this kind of information so here it is.

First all of these are widely beneficial and well tolerated. When I say widely beneficial I mean they help many common problems. If you want a complete if very conservative list of dosages for different ailments go to wholehealthMD. You can also find out if your supplements and drugs are counteracting each other.

Vitamin D3

Vitamins B-6/B-12/folate

Magnesium citrate or glycinate

Omega 3 essential fatty acid

These are the supplements almost everyone needs. Some people need to supplement more some less but these are very hard to get in sufficient quantities from even a perfect diet with perfect digestion. If you are over age 30, lead a stressed or hectic life or have less than perfect digestion. You probably need most of these if not all.

Vitamin D: 60 to 80% of the population is low in this vitamin. There is a simple blood test for this vitamin. I test all of my patients if they haven't had a test in the last year. If you tested low normal (20-30) it's not enough. Optimal levels are 60-80. If you have problems with bone health, thyroid, obesity muscle or joint pain or achiness, depression or unusual head sweating you may have a deficiency. Vitamin D is also important to your immune system and the production of killer T cells which kill cancer cells. High doses are used to treat inflammation in rheumatoid arthritis

B Vitamins: In most cases these should be taken as a complex they work best together. They are called the stress vitamins for good reason. Much of our ability to deal with any kind of stress depends on complex reactions in our body and brain supported by these vitamins, but that's not all they do.

B12: Known for its importance in treating depression and anemia, depletion of this vitamin can also cause numbness in hands and feet, memory problems, anxiety and fatigue. It is also 1 of the three B vitamins that can lower your homocysteine level. High levels of homocysteine indicate inflammation and are a good indicator of heart disease. The other 2 B vitamins are B6 and folate. When you read the back of the supplement bottle (you do read the back don't you) look for methylcobalamine. If it says cyanocobalamine put it back on the shelf. Cyanocobalamine has been banned in many countries but it is still the most commonly used form in this country. I always start new patients with an evaluation of the supplements they are taking to see if they are getting what they need and what they are paying for. Cyanocobalamine shows up in many supplements even so called high end brands. A blood test is available for levels of B12. CDC recommends a supplement if you are older than 50.

Folate: This is not the same as folic acid! Folic acid is a synthetic form and recent research shows it can prevent the body from using Folate and that can cause problems. See above for its effect on your heart. If you are a woman who might become pregnant or is pregnant it is crucial for fetal development. Deficiency of this vitamin causes fatigue, premature graying of hair mouth and tongue sores.

B6: This is very important for your immune system and energy production see above for the effect on your heart. Depletion can cause depression, fatigue, confusion and memory problems, nerve pain and numbness.

Magnesium: It is estimated that 80% of the population is magnesium depleted. This is possibly because it is used in 300 chemical reactions in the body or because soil levels are much lower than they were in the past or both. Only about 1% of magnesium is in the blood so it's hard to test accurately. It is difficult to get enough from your diet. Magnesium is an inexpensive supplement that can improve a lot of conditions. It can help with sleep, muscle cramps, migraines, constipation, anxiety and heart arrhythmias. It is useful for pain and inflammation. My favorite form is Magnesium Glycinate. It is chelated and less likely to cause loose stool. Mag. citrate is good if you are constipated but not usually long term. Mag. Taurate is stronger at calming. Avoid Mag. Oxide absorption can be a problem, this is the cheapest and most common form.

Omega 3 Essential fatty acids These have to come from diet or supplements your body can't make them (that's why they're called essential). Usually supplements are from fish oil (they shouldn't taste fishy). Krill oil is getting a lot of press but it is not high in active ingredients and can be expensive. Flax oil may not be converted in the body into an active form its OK in addition to fish oil. Don't buy omega 6 or 9 they are not essential.