

The Tuesday Minute

Nutritional information.... one byte at a time

This Week's Topic

Simple Multi Vitamin Reduced Cardiovascular Death By 37%

How many times have you heard the saying the best offense is a good defense? That saying may seem trite, but in the world of nutrition these words are golden. The evidence is overwhelming that vitamins and trace minerals are essential for enzyme systems and reduce disease of all kinds. You will be shocked in a few moments when I review some of the studies, but before I do, I want you to think foundational.

What are the foundations that every patient should be taking? "Well Joe, you don't know my patients" and "they don't want to take pills." I don't mean to be rude when I make this statement, but we have to come to the realization that we all went into health care to help people achieve a level of optimal health. You can't be healthy unless you are getting the basic nutrients which are almost impossible to get from diet alone. Sure you can pump yourself up on coffee and sugar, but true vibrant health is unattainable without optimal nutrients.

I have heard more than one doctor say that it borders on malpractice to NOT recommend a good multivitamin and balanced essential fatty acid. One of the doctors said he believes if you don't recommend a good multiple there is enough evidence available right now in well respected medical journals that you could be sued for malpractice.

Now of course we all know that will never happen, but he was making a dramatic point that

the data is strong. Consider the French seven year double blinded, randomized, placebo controlled study that showed a reduction in cardiovascular death by 37 % and a reduction in cancer diagnosis by 33% in men ages 45-60 with subjects taking low dose antioxidants and a few trace minerals. These are huge numbers with profound implications. Double blinded, randomized, placebo controlled studies are the gold standard of testing only to be enhanced by the number of subjects, which were over 10,000 people. This is an impressive study.

The reason for "taking drugs to lower cholesterol" is to reduce heart disease. We want to reduce heart disease so people won't die. The French study showed a reduction of death by 37% and reduction of cancer diagnosis by 33%. It's a big deal. If a patentable drug could show those numbers, we would be hearing about it day and night on the news not to mention the commercials that would be generated.

Another study, on the elderly showed a multi-vitamin/mineral supplement significantly improved their overall nutritional status, bone density, and even reduced their falls.

A third study showed that patients who took multivitamins had a lower risk of high blood pressure. The multivitamin group also had 73% less risk of diabetes and a 52% less risk of coronary disease compared to the non-supplemented group. Also subjects taking multiple vitamin

mineral supplements reported having good or excellent health status (74% more than the non user group).

Some may say that the subjective reports are just placebo, but it is difficult to change bone density with a placebo; and as I reported from the French study, the nutrient group had 37% less death. That's pretty tough to fake. Still another double blind, placebo control study, published in the American Journal of Medicine showed multivitamin use was associated with lower C-reactive protein levels. C-reactive protein is associated with inflammation, and inflammation is associated with a host of conditions.

Here's what one professor from Harvard Medical School said in the prestigious Journal of the American Medical Association, "suboptimal intake of some vitamins, above levels causing classic vitamin deficiency, is a risk factor for chronic diseases and common in the general population, especially the elderly. Most people do not consume an optimal amount of all vitamins by diet alone. Pending strong evidence of effectiveness from randomized trials, it appears prudent for ALL adults to take vitamin supplements."

If patients have deficiencies, even in very inexpensive nutrients, it causes huge changes even at the genetic level. We all know about folic acid deficiencies causing spinal bifida in newborns, but what about our genes? Consider this quote by Dr. Ames and his colleagues as he reports the effects of various nutrients on DNA damage and repair, "These findings suggest that a diet poor in folate may pose a risk of DNA damage... comparable to that of a relatively high

dose of radiation." A relatively high dose of radiation, wait a minute, is anybody listening?

Plus these few studies are with just SIMPLE nutrients. What if we add a high quality blend of EFAs high in Omega 3 fatty acids? Most of these studies are not done with highly bio-available nutrients OR with the life style changes that you teach your patients which will amplify the effects. Clearly we have to help our patients understand that establishing a nutrient foundation is critical to healthy enzymes, healthy cells, and ultimately healthy patients.

So you can see in these few studies that a good offense really starts with a good defense. Feed our cells the foundational things they need, make some minor lifestyle changes, and then we can talk about the high tech nutrients that get so much attention on the internet. The basics, it's where we start.

A doctor colleague of mine recently shared how a woman diagnosed with cancer and several other serious issues came to her for help. Within months of treatment the patient was showing great improvement and was praising the doctor. Even the doctor herself was amazed because the treatment was a multivitamin. That's it, but why is that so surprising? The science is solid. So let's take the time with ALL our patients. Let's cover the basics.

Thanks for reading this week. I'll see you next Tuesday.