

#HELPMYNHS

TO GIVE ME THE BEST CARE



Patient advice about vitamin and mineral supplements that can be bought directly over the counter from pharmacies.

Brighton and Hove and High Weald Lewes Havens CCGs do not support the routine prescribing of vitamin and mineral supplements.

Do vitamin and mineral supplements need to be taken at all?

A varied, balanced diet will provide most people with all of the vitamins and minerals needed for good health.

To provide all the vitamins and minerals needed, every day you should eat

- at least 5 portions of vegetables and fruit
- starchy foods (potatoes, rice, pulses, pasta, bread) with each meal
- 2-3 servings of milk and dairy foods (or dairy-free alternative fortified with calcium)
- some meat, fish, eggs, beans/pulses or other foods rich in protein

Are there any vitamin and mineral supplements recommended by the Department of Health?

Folic acid: For women trying to conceive or who are in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

Vitamin D: Dose varies based on age. Speak to your local pharmacist for advice.

These may be purchased over the counter or using Healthy Start vouchers.

In 2017/2018 Brighton and Hove and High Weald Lewes Havens CCGs spent over £500,000 on prescribing vitamins and minerals, which could be bought from a pharmacy or shop for a lower cost than the amount incurred by the NHS.

Are any vitamins and minerals available on prescription?

There are some exceptions where vitamins and minerals may be prescribed by the NHS:

- Medically diagnosed deficiency, including for those patients who may have a lifelong or chronic condition. Continuing need should be reviewed on a regular basis. Nb: maintenance or preventative treatment is not an exception.
- Calcium and vitamin D for osteoporosis
- Malnutrition including alcoholism
- Patients suitable to receive Healthy Start vitamins for pregnancy or children between the ages 6 months to their fourth birthday. (Nb: this is not on prescription)

Vitamins and mineral supplements following **bariatric surgery** should be bought over the counter.

Further information

Healthy Start:

<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/healthy-start-vitamins/>

Vitamins in pregnancy:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/vitamins-minerals-supplements-pregnant/>

BDA Food Facts Supplements:

<https://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/supplements.pdf>

Public Health England Eatwell Guide:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>

BDA Food Facts 5 a day:

https://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/fruit_vegetables_how_get_five-a-day

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