

# Total Nutrition

## The ABCs Of Vitamin E

(NAPSA)—Back when I was studying to become a registered dietitian, scientists did not know a lot about the various functions of vitamin E. A lot has been learned in the past 20 years about the importance of vitamin E for overall health.

A recent study found that whole grain breakfast cereal supplies vitamin E in an easy-to-absorb form, says Dr. Maret G.



Mindy Hermann

Traber, of the Linus Pauling Institute in Corvallis, Oregon. Dr. Traber's research shows that the amount of vitamin E that is absorbed from one serving of Whole Grain Total (which

is fortified with 30 IU vitamin E) and 1 cup skim milk is greater than that from a typical vitamin E supplement (400 IU) taken without food. Here's the good news—fortified ready-to-eat cereal is the third top source of vitamin E for American adults.

The natural form of vitamin E, d-alpha-tocopherol, is an antioxidant that helps protect cells in the body from damaging substances. Vitamin E prevents fat from becoming rancid, a process called oxidation. Oxidation is caused by unstable molecules and has been linked to numerous conditions, including premature aging, cataracts, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and inflammation. Vitamin E also helps keep platelets from sticking together and forming blood clots.

### Top Sources of Vitamin E

Vegetable oils

Regular salad dressings

Fortified ready-to-eat breakfast cereals

Nuts and seeds

Leafy green vegetables



Vitamin E is fat-soluble, meaning that it is present in fat in foods and in the body. In fact, the best food sources of vitamin E are fat-containing foods—vegetable oils and the germ portion of whole grains. When whole grains are processed, the germ portion of the grain, along with its vitamin E, is removed.

It can be a challenge to get enough vitamin E. Why? Because people who follow a lower fat diet usually include fewer portions of vegetable oils, a major source of vitamin E. In addition, the Institute of Medicine recently increased its daily vitamin E recommendation from 10 milligrams to 15 milligrams for adults.

### Ask Mindy

**Q: Could I get the same benefit from taking a vitamin E supplement?**

**A:** According to Dr. Traber, vitamin E supplements are not well absorbed if they are taken with a low fat breakfast. (Supplements are absorbed best when taken with a fat-rich meal, like dinner.) Whole grain cereals and other vitamin E sources also supply other important nutrients and compounds not found in supplements.