



Major Minerals the Body Needs

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Plan-Based Nutrition and Lifestyle

Minerals

What comes to mind when you hear the word minerals? Do you think of rocks, stones, and metal? How can these be of benefit to your body? Minerals are another group of nutrients (along with vitamins) needed by the body. They have two general body functions: to regulate body processes, and to give the body structure.

Their regulating functions include a wide variety of systems, such as:

- Heartbeat
- Blood Clotting
- Maintenance of the internal pressure of body fluids
- Nerve responses
- The transport of oxygen from the lungs to the tissues

Even though they make up only a small percentage of your body—about 4 percent of your body weight – minerals are essential to life. Minerals are very stable. They cannot be destroyed by light, water, heat or food handling processes. In fact, the little bit of ash that remains when a food is completely burned is the mineral content.

Inside the body, vitamins and minerals play many important roles. But whereas the body can continue to function without getting the recommended daily allotments of some vitamins, a mineral deficiency can lead to death. As important as they are, most

people today don't really know that much about minerals and how they impact the body.

What Minerals Do

In order to make the hemoglobin found in red blood cells, the body needs iron. In order to build strong teeth and bones, the body needs calcium. Calcium is also crucial for the proper functioning of the kidneys, muscles and nerves.

Without adequate levels of Iodine, the thyroid gland cannot perform its most important task which is to produce energy.

Manganese, selenium and zinc are antioxidants and some of their responsibilities include helping to heal wounds, helping the skeletal system develop properly, and protecting cell membranes. Chromium helps keep arteries clear.

The minerals the body needs are divided into two categories. These two categories are: Major minerals and Trace Minerals. The difference between the categories mainly has to do with the amounts the body requires. The body must have a minimum of 100 milligrams per day to carry out the bodily functions associated with the Major minerals. In the case of Trace minerals, on a per day basis, less than 100 milligrams are required.

What are the Seven Major Minerals?

Calcium



vegetables.

Probably best known for preventing osteoporosis, calcium is necessary for much more than strong bones and teeth. Calcium is found in dark green

Chloride



found in salt and many vegetables, including celery and tomatoes.

Chloride is a major mineral that your body needs to make digestive juices and to keep body fluids balanced. Chloride is

Magnesium



Magnesium is important for many biochemical functions. It's found in nuts, seeds, whole grains, legumes and dark green vegetables.

Phosphorus



high in phosphorus.

Phosphorus is important for bone growth, energy production and normal cell membranes. Foods that are high in protein such as legumes, nuts, and seeds are

Potassium



and vegetables.

Potassium is important for nervous system function, muscle contraction and fluid balance in the body. Potassium is found in fruits

Sodium



source is salt.

Your body needs sodium to maintain fluid balance and blood pressure. Sodium is found in many foods, but the best known

Sulphur



Garlic, onions, cabbage, cauliflower, legumes, asparagus, dried beans, nuts, chives.

Your body needs sulphur for a healthy hair, skin and nails, it also helps maintain oxygen balance for proper brain function. Sulphur is found in

Primary Sources of Minerals

All Minerals come from the ground but as few of us eat dirt and rocks, how does our body get the minerals it needs from the food that we eat? Minerals primarily make their way into our bodies by way of the foods that grow from the ground and the animals that survive off the land. Fruits, vegetables, lean meats, poultry, grains, legumes. These and others are the primary sources of the minerals our bodies need to survive.

What's also interesting is that individuals who eat a lot of processed foods or who fail to consume a nutritionally-balanced diet often suffer from diseases that have been directly attributed to vitamin and mineral related deficiencies.

Much controversy surrounds the subject of mineral supplementation. Ideally, people should strive to meet their daily mineral requirements from food because, as is the case with some vitamins, excessive amounts of some minerals inside the body can have a toxic effect.

Minerals are used for creating automobiles, building, pots, pans and many other durable products. But most importantly for humans, minerals are essential for body and health in order to build and maintain strong bodies capable of functioning as designed!