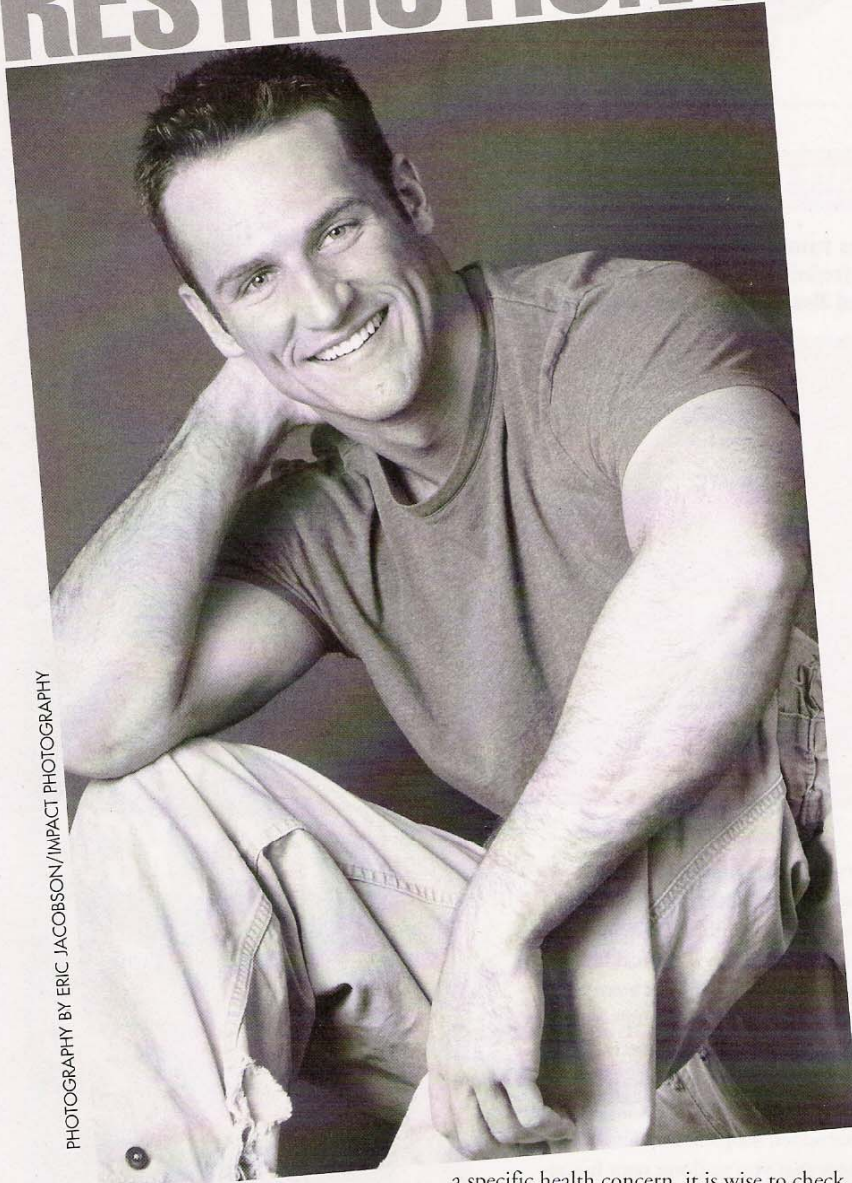


By Andy Troy, C.S.C.S.

FEEL GOOD FACTS

NEW INFORMATION FOR BUILDING A HEALTHIER YOU

SUPPLEMENT RESTRICTIONS



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC JACOBSON/IMPACT PHOTOGRAPHY

Supplements are all the rage these days, with annual sales topping \$15 billion. Still, not every supplement is meant for everyone. The following are several circumstances that may alter your nutritional requirements. If you have

a specific health concern, it is wise to check with your health care provider before using certain supplements. He or she will be able to tailor your vitamin and mineral intake to your specific needs. Some portions of this article are reprinted from my book, *Living Young: 32 Habits of Ageless People*, recently

published by Portable Fitness Media.

ADVANCED KIDNEY DISEASE

People on dialysis quickly learn that they must not only restrict fluid intake, but also the intake of several essential minerals. These include potassium, magnesium and phosphorous – or as one of my friends who suffers from this affliction put it, “All the things that other people need.”

ANTICOAGULANT MEDICATIONS

Certain individuals suffer from hypercoagulation, a tendency toward excess clotting of the blood. This condition can lead to stroke, heart attack or pulmonary embolus – life-threatening conditions that are often treated with medication such as heparin or warfarin.

Some supplements that are also helpful in preventing these ailments should not be combined with anticoagulant medications. This is because they may cause the medication to work too well, leading to excessive bleeding and putting the individual at risk for a hemorrhagic stroke. These substances include vitamin E and fish oil, and should not be taken by individuals who are taking anticoagulant medications without first consulting their physician.

DIABETES

Osteoarthritis affects 80 percent of Americans ages 65 and older. It is a condition where the cartilage that lines the joints begins to wear away, resulting in pain and inflammation. Glucosamine is a supplement that has shown promising results for arthritis sufferers, due to its apparent ability to preserve and rebuild cartilage.

In spite of glucosamine’s apparent benefits, diabetics should be cautious when using this supplement. There is evidence that glucosamine may impair glucose tolerance, thereby exacerbating their condition. In addition, some studies have found that these products may reduce the effectiveness of other supplements believed to allow the body to better utilize insulin. While the evidence is not conclusive, diabetics should seek the advice of a physician or registered dietician before (continued on page 147)

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taking any type of supplements that may contain glucosamine.

HEART DISEASE

We have all heard about the importance of having enough calcium in our diet, often leading to regular consumption of calcium supplements. What we don't often hear about is the critical importance of enough magnesium in the diet of those taking calcium supplements. Calcium is required by the body for a muscle to contract, while magnesium is needed in order for a muscle to relax. If a muscle has too much calcium and not enough magnesium, it could go into spasm. Remember that the heart is a muscle and you can see the importance of keeping these minerals in the proper proportion. In addition, taking calcium without enough magnesium can lead the blood to clot, a prelude to heart attacks and strokes. The ideal ratio of calcium to magnesium is 2:1. Keep this in mind when purchasing supplements.

EXCESS IRON

Supplemental iron is important to premenopausal women. But, for the majority of men, this is not the case. Too much iron

can be damaging to your body, putting you at risk for heart or liver damage. This is due to iron's relationship with free radicals and their tendency to attack healthy cells. Because of this, men should take vitamins that are iron-free, unless otherwise advised by their physician.

PROSTATE CANCER


Next to his trusty bulldog, zinc can be a man's best friend. Zinc is an essential trace mineral, and a deficiency can lead to both sterility and impotence. In contrast, excessive zinc supplementation has been linked to an increased risk of prostate cancer. Because of this, supplementation in excess of 100 mgs. per day should be avoided unless recommended by your physician.

SMOKERS/CANCER SURVIVORS

We all know that antioxidants are our friends due to their well-documented ability to combat the cancer-causing effects of free radicals. Because of this, a diet rich in *beta carotene*, a potent antioxidant, is an excellent choice for both lung cancer survivors and smokers looking to avoid developing the disease. The same can't be said for beta carotene supplements. Several studies have found a link between the consumption of these products and an *increased* lung cancer risk. One such study involving over

29,000 smokers found an 18 percent increase in the lung cancer rate of those taking beta carotene supplements.

TANNING

Despite the risks, many people still tan. Unfortunately, some individuals neglect the sunscreen, hoping to protect themselves by consuming antioxidant supplements. Those people would be wise to note the results of several studies that have shown a link between regular use of antioxidant supplements and an increased risk of developing skin cancer. Bear in mind that the same is not true of foods that naturally contain these nutrients. 

Andy Troy, C.S.C.S., is the author of *Living Young: 32 Habits of Ageless People*. He is also a personal trainer and fitness consultant based in New York City, and is the creator of *The Bedroom Workout for Men* (Strato Stream). For more information, log onto the website andytroy.com or e-mail AndyTroyCSCS@aol.com.

