

A FEW FACTS ABOUT VITAMINS

Scientific work is daily bringing to light more and more facts about the various vitamins that are necessary to health.

One important finding that has upset previous notions is that a given vitamin product with a specified "unit content" may be very effective for one species of animal and of little or no effect for another species. The practical effect of this discovery is that the units up to now used to measure vitamin content can no longer be considered a dependable measure of merit. Since the unit assay is made by tests upon rats or guinea pigs, the effect on the human may be quite at variance, and has, in fact, been found as much as one thousand percent off (in tests of Vitamin A from different sources). That leaves the buyer of vitamins with only one criterion by which to judge a vitamin product — the reputation the product has in producing remedial effects in the human subject. Any good product that has been on the market for a number of years will have a reputation for producing results, and that reputation naturally means more than a claim of high results in an animal assay. As Sir James Paget has so aptly stated:

"Receiving thankfully all that physiology or chemistry or any other science can give us, let us still hold that that alone is true which is proved clinically, and that which is clinically proved needs no further evidence."

Your physician is your best guide to advise you what vitamin product has stood the test of time in his experience as to results, and is your best source of advice as to what vitamins are of help in the treatment of various diseased conditions.

If you want to build health by adding vitamins to your dietary regime, don't make the mistake of taking heavy doses of one or two vitamins. It is just as essential that you get a "balanced ration" of vitamins as of other nutritional factors.

It is important that the distinction between a pure vitamin and a vitamin complex be made clear. Vitamins are like other food elements in that in Nature they are never found pure; they are found as "complexes," that is, as mixtures of chemically related substances. There is the same difference between pure Vitamin B and Vitamin B complex as there is between refined starch and whole-wheat flour. Both are carbohydrates. The starch may be chemically pure, but just because it is chemically pure it is less wholesome than the whole wheat flour. No chemist is competent enough to catalog all the additions necessary to make the starch equivalent to the whole wheat, for the reason that all the co-operative nutritional factors in the flour probably have not been identified. That is why pure or synthetic vitamins are inferior to concentrates made from natural food sources. They are cheaper, of course, since synthetic products can be put together in a chemical works, whereas the natural product must be laboriously gleaned from the food or food by-product source, which may be some such material as rice bran, wheat germ, etc.

All the known vitamins are now recognized as occurring in the form of "complexes." It has also been found that the potency becomes less if the purification is carried too far, for some, if not all, of the vitamins. That is significant, showing that these various factors of the complex co-operate with each other in producing the vitamin effect. It also explains the disappointing results with some of the pure or synthetic forms.

Royal Lee, Director of Research,
Vitamin Products Company,
Milwaukee, Wisconsin