Vitamins And Minerals Reading Exercise Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

We all know that vitamins and minerals are critical for maintaining our health, but what’s the best way to get them? Eat a balanced diet, of course, with plenty of fruits and vegetables. But anyone who despises broccoli and hates grapefruit will tell you – it isn’t easy!

On the other hand, it is possible to get too much of a good thing – you can actually overdose on vitamins and minerals. The best protection is to be an educated consumer; don’t go along with nutritional fads until you are satisfied that they are safe.

If you're like most kids, you've probably heard at least one parent say, "Don't forget to take your vitamin!" "Eat your salad — it's packed with vitamins!" But what exactly are vitamins?

### Vitamins Feed Your Needs

Your body is one powerful machine, capable of doing all sorts of things by itself. But one thing it can't do is make vitamins. That's where food comes in. Your body is able to get the vitamins it needs from the foods you eat because different foods contain different vitamins. The key is to eat different foods to get an assortment of vitamins.

**Vitamin C**

This vitamin is important for keeping body tissues, such as gums and muscles in good shape. C is also key if you get a cut or wound because it helps you heal. This vitamin also helps your body resist **infection**. This means that even though you can't always avoid getting sick, vitamin C makes it a little harder for your body to become infected with an illness. A lack of vitamin C in your diet leads to **scurvy**. This disease makes your teeth fall out as you can’t make **collagen -** a tissue that helps hold your cells together!

**Which foods are rich in vitamin C?:** citrus fruits, like oranges, strawberries, tomatoes, broccoli, cabbage, kiwi fruit

**Vitamin D**

No bones about it . . . vitamin D is the vitamin you need for strong bones! It's also great for forming strong teeth. Vitamin D even lends a hand to an important mineral — it helps your body absorb the amount of calcium it needs. A lack of Vitamin D in your diet leads to a disease called **Rickets.** Rickets causes soft bones and therefore deformities in children.

**Which foods are rich in vitamin D?** milk fortified with vitamin D**,** fish**,** egg yolks**,** liver**,** fortified cereal

**Minerals**

Did you ever notice how TV commercials for breakfast cereal always mention vitamins and **minerals**? But when you think of minerals, food isn't the first thing that comes to mind. Aren't minerals something you find in the earth, like iron and quartz?

Well, yes, but small amounts of some minerals are also in foods — for instance, red meat, such as beef, is a good source of iron.

Just like [vitamins](http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/food/vitamin.html), minerals help your body grow, develop, and stay healthy. The body uses minerals to perform many different functions — from building strong [bones](http://kidshealth.org/kid/body/bones_noSW.html) to transmitting [nerve](http://kidshealth.org/kid/word/n/word_nervous_system.html) impulses. Some minerals are even used to make hormones or maintain a normal [heartbeat](http://kidshealth.org/kid/body/heart_noSW.html).

**Calcium**

Calcium is the top mineral when it comes to your bones. This mineral helps build strong bones, so you can do everything from standing up straight to scoring that winning goal. It also helps build strong, healthy [teeth](http://kidshealth.org/kid/body/teeth_noSW.html), for chomping on tasty food.

**Which foods are rich in calcium?** dairy products, leafy green vegetables

**Iron**

The body needs iron to transport oxygen from your lungs to the rest of your body. Your entire body needs oxygen to stay healthy and alive. Iron helps because it's important in the formation of hemoglobin , which is the part of your [**red blood cells**](http://kidshealth.org/kid/word/r/word_red_blood_cells.html)that carries oxygen throughout the body.

**Which foods are rich in iron?** meat, fish, eggs, beans, baked potato with skins, dried fruits, leafy green vegetables

When people don't get enough of these important minerals, they can have health problems. For instance, too little calcium — especially when you're a kid — can lead to weaker bones. Too little iron in your diet can lead to a disease called anaemia. Anaemia makes you feel tired all the time as not enough oxygen can be transported to your respiring cells! Some kids may take mineral supplements, but most kids don't need them if they eat a nutritious diet. So eat those minerals and stay healthy!

**FINISH THE SENTENCES USING THE INFORMATION FROM THE TEXT ABOVE:**

A balanced diet means a diet rich in….

A nutritional fad is….

The human body has a flaw….

Healing and resistance to infection are aided by….

Scurvy is a disease which causes….

If you want great teeth and bones up your intake of….

Soft bones are often a sign of a disease called….

Fish is a great source of….

One of the little known things minerals can do is….

Dairy products are the best source of….

Blood wouldn’t travel around your body properly without….

Anaemia can be avoided if you….

Taking extra nutritional supplements is not needed if you….