

Vitamin E

(Alpha-Tocopherol)

DESCRIPTION/FUNCTION

Vitamin E is classified as a fat-soluble vitamin. The vitamin E family contains eight members, in two groups: tocopherols (alpha, beta, gamma, delta) and tocotrienols (alpha, beta, gamma, delta). A strong antioxidant, vitamin E may help prevent oxidation of unsaturated fatty acids and vitamin A in the intestinal tract and body tissues. Vitamin E also protects red blood cells from hemolysis, and has roles in reproduction (in animals), epithelial tissue maintenance, and prostaglandin synthesis.

DRI (RDA or AI for Adults)

15 mg natural E (2R-isomers) or 30 mg synthetic E (2S-isomers).
Lactation: 19 mg natural E or 38 mg synthetic E.
Multiply mg by 1.49 to convert to IU.

MAJOR SOURCES

Wheat germ oil, nut and seed oils, nuts and seeds.

MAINTENANCE/THERAPEUTIC RANGE

100 IU to 1,000 IU (natural form).

POSSIBLE THERAPEUTIC APPLICATIONS

Angina pectoris; asthma; cancer (bladder, gastric, prostate); cataracts; coronary heart disease; immune function; infertility (male); macular degeneration; memory loss; neuropathy; osteoarthritis; Parkinson's disease; poor circulation; premenstrual syndrome; retinopathy; rheumatoid arthritis; stroke (ischemic).

COMMENTS

The more you take, the lower the percentage absorbed. Therefore, although vitamin E is fat-soluble and is stored in the body, it is better to take smaller doses several times per day. The natural form (d-, not dl-) is more biologically active. Most research has been done using alpha-tocopherol. There is growing interest in other members of the vitamin E family (gamma-tocopherol and the tocotrienols).

CAUTIONS

Consult with health practitioner if you are taking blood thinning medication, have a bleeding disorder, or have suffered a recent stroke (hemorrhagic type).