

7 Vitamins and Minerals for Oral Health

Good nutrition plays a vital role in your dental health.

For a good foundation make sure to incorporate the following:

Vitamin A

Vitamin A contributes to your immune functions, vision and saliva. It helps your mucous membranes stay healthy, which prevents dry mouth and helps with the healing process in your mouth.

In your diet:

For strong gums and teeth, good sources are fish, egg yolks and liver. You can also find vitamin A in leafy green vegetables such as spinach, kale and collard greens, or in oranges or other orange-colored foods like apricots, cantaloupe, pumpkin, carrots and sweet potatoes. These fruits & veggies contain high levels of beta-carotene, which your body converts into vitamin A.

Calcium

Throughout the body, calcium helps build bones and provides structural support. In your mouth, this mineral helps to harden your tooth enamel and strengthen your jawbone.

In your diet:

Milk, cheese and yogurt are good sources of calcium. If dairy doesn't work for you, broccoli, carrots and salmon are also good choices.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium while boosting bone mineral density, so it's crucial to get an adequate amount of vitamin D to get the most out of your calcium intake.

In your diet:

Your body naturally makes vitamin D when it's exposed to sunlight, but the vitamin can also be found in fatty fish, canned tuna and portabello mushrooms. Some foods and drinks have been fortified with vitamin D, such as milk, orange juice and cereal.

Potassium

Like vitamin D, potassium improves your bone mineral density. It also works with magnesium to prevent your blood from becoming too acidic, which can leach calcium from your bones and teeth.

In your diet:

Bananas are well known sources of potassium. Other fruits and vegetables with high levels of the mineral include Lima beans, tomatoes, Swiss chard, potatoes, sweet potatoes, avocados and prunes.

Phosphorus

Phosphorus is a mineral that's present in your bones, teeth and even your DNA! It works with calcium to create hydroxyapatite, the main structural component of tooth enamel. Some toothpastes also contain this substance.

In your diet:

Phosphorus is found in a wide range of foods. Rich sources of the mineral include seafood such as scallops, sardines, cod, shrimp, tuna and salmon. You can also find it in beef, pork and cheese. If you'd prefer to get your phosphorus from plant-based foods, consider soybeans, lentils and pumpkin seeds.

Vitamin K

Think of this vitamin as a shield — it helps block substances that break down your bone. It also helps your body produce osteocalcin, a protein that supports bone strength. Deficiency in vitamin K can slow down your body's ability to heal and also make you more likely to bleed.

In your diet:

Leafy greens, such as kale, collards and spinach, can help you meet your vitamin K quota. Other great sources include parsley, broccoli and brussels sprouts.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C strengthens your gums and the soft tissue in your mouth. It can protect against gingivitis, the early stage of gum disease, and can prevent your teeth from loosening.

In your diet:

You probably already know that citrus fruits are rich in vitamin C, but you can also find it in potatoes and leafy greens.