



MIGHTY MINERALS

What We Need to Stay Healthy

by Judith Fertig

According to the authors of *Minerals: The Forgotten Nutrient—Your Secret Weapon for Getting and Staying Healthy*, they are integral to our health. Joy Stephenson-Laws, the lead author and founder of the nonprofit Proactive Health Labs, in Santa Monica, California, suggests getting a full-spectrum mineral test through a healthcare provider to identify any deficiencies or imbalances.

Although the U.S. Food and Drug Administration gives a broad, general Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for minerals, it's not the most up-to-date or the most specific information according to gender, age or stage in life. The more current Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI) are nutrient-reference values developed by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies—five private, nonprofit institutions that provide independent, objective analysis, located in Washington, D.C., Irvine, California, and

Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Intended to serve as a guide for good nutrition by covering 40-plus nutrient substances and more demographically specific than the RDA, the DRI provides a scientific basis for the development of food guidelines in the U.S. and Canada.

This list of important minerals, based on the worldwide studies collected in the journal *Minerals*, is a good starting point. Another good reference is the extensive chart from the IOM of the National Academy of Sciences at ConsumerLab.com/RDAs.

OUR BODY'S PERIODIC TABLE

Sodium with Chlorine

Why we need it: fluid balance, nerve transmission, muscle contraction

Food sources: sodium combines with chlorine in salt; Himalayan sea salt also contains 84 trace elements

Recommended Daily Intake: 1,500 milli-

grams (mg) of sodium

Potassium
Why we need it: fluid balance, nerve transmission, muscle contraction
Food sources: bananas, dried figs, nuts, avocados
Recommended Daily Intake: 4.7 grams (g)

Calcium
Why we need it: strong teeth and bones, muscle relaxation and contraction, blood clotting, blood pressure regulation, immune system health
Food sources: leafy green vegetables, fortified nut milk, dairy products, canned sardines/salmon, dried figs, oysters; plus mineral water brands labeled higher in calcium and lower in sodium, per integrative medicine pioneer Dr. Andrew Weil
Recommended Daily Intake: 1,000 to 1,200 mg

Sulfur
Why we need it: joint function
Food sources: fish, beef, poultry, egg yolks, beans, coconuts, bananas, garlic
Recommended Daily Intake: 6 mg of sulfur-containing amino acids per pound of adult weight

Phosphorous
Why we need it: works with calcium to build strong bones, repair cells
Food sources: salmon, yogurt, turkey, lentils, almonds
Recommended Daily Intake: 700 mg

Magnesium
Why we need it: strong bones, energy, mental health
Food sources: leafy green vegetables, nuts,

seeds and foods
with fiber

Recommended Daily Intake: 310 to 320 mg for adult women, 410 to 420 mg for adult men

Iron

Why we need it: helps make blood hemoglobin

Food sources: breakfast cereals fortified with iron, white beans, dark chocolate, beef liver, spinach

Recommended Daily Intake: 18 mg for adult women, 8 mg for adult men

Manganese

Why we need it: healthy immune system

Food sources: nuts, seeds, green leafy vegetables

Recommended Daily Intake: 11 mg

Zinc

Why we need it: to ward off colds, aid sexual function

Food sources: oysters, shellfish, red meat, whole grains, nuts

Recommended Daily Intake: 9 mg for women, 11 mg for men

Copper

Why we need it: facilitates enzymes action

Food sources: organ meats, whole grains, shellfish, dark leafy greens

Recommended Daily Intake: 900 micrograms (mcg)

Iodine

Why we need it: thyroid function, healthy skin and nails

Food sources: seaweed, turkey, cranberries, navy beans, iodized table salt

Recommended Daily Intake: 150 mcg

Selenium

Why we need it: lowering cancer risk

Food sources: Brazil nuts, tuna, halibut, turkey

Recommended Daily Intake: 55 mcg

Molybdenum

Why we need it: facilitates production of natural enzymes

Food sources: lima beans, cauliflower, peas, soybeans

Recommended Daily Intake: 45 mcg

Chromium

Why we need it: reduces insulin resistance, helps lower cholesterol

Food sources: lean meats, whole grains, broccoli, green beans

Recommended Daily Intake: 25 mcg for adult females, 35 mcg for adult males

We require macrominerals—those we need in larger amounts—as well as microminerals—those necessary in trace amounts. For a good overview from the Harvard University Medical School, visit Tinyurl.com/HelpGuide2Minerals.

Judith Fertig writes award-winning cookbooks plus foodie fiction from Overland Park, KS (JudithFertig.com).