



What is it?

Vitamin E is a fat-soluble vitamin. Vitamin E is available in natural and synthetic forms.

- **dl** alpha – indicates it is synthetic eg dl alpha tocopheryl acetate
- **d** alpha – indicates it is natural eg d alpha tocopherol

Natural vitamin E is better absorbed than synthetic.

The amount of vitamin E in a product is presented in milligrams 'mg' or international units 'IU'. Equivalent values between mg and IU vary between synthetic and natural forms of vitamin E.

Why you may need vitamin E

Anaemia – deficiency of vitamin E can affect red blood cells causing a condition called erythrocyte haemolysis, simply meaning fragile red blood cells that break easily leading to reduced life of these cells and anaemia.

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) – studies found a reduced risk of 27 per cent for visual acuity loss and 25 per cent for progression of AMD in patients supplemented with vitamin E.

Prostate cancer and **bladder cancer** – vitamin E is associated with a reduced risk of bladder and prostate cancer and mortality associated with these conditions.

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) – symptoms of anxiety, craving, and depression were reduced when patients were supplemented with vitamin E.

Infertility – men with low sperm count, motility and immature sperm received vitamin E and achieved 21 per cent success of impregnation compared to zero for similar patients receiving placebo.

Cardiovascular disease – vitamin E thins the blood (anticoagulant), thus improving blood flow. It also works as an anti-oxidant by reducing oxidation of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and helps reduce



cholesterol plaque formation.

Varicose veins – vitamin E assists peripheral circulation.

Anti-oxidant – decreases cellular damage by free radicals. Damage is linked to conditions such as cataracts, Alzheimer's disease and cardiovascular disease.

Wound healing – applied topically, vitamin E assists wound healing to non broken skin.

How much do you need?

Recommended Daily Intake (RDI)

Adults (over 19 years): 7–10 mg daily

Pregnancy: 7 mg daily

Breastfeeding: 9.5 mg daily

Children over 7 years: 8–11 mg daily

Children under 7 years: 2.5–6 mg daily

Dose used in clinical trials

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD): 400 IU with elemental zinc 80 mg, vitamin C 500 mg, and betacarotene 15 mg daily

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Bladder cancer: 200 IU daily for over 10 years
Prostate cancer: 55 IU daily
Premenstrual syndrome: 300–500 IU daily
Cardiovascular health: 400–800 IU daily
Infertility: 200–600 IU daily

Symptoms of deficiency

Symptoms include poor circulation, increased blood clotting, muscle wasting, poor coordination and reflexes.

Food sources

The best sources include wheat germ oil, sunflower seeds, sweet potato, sunflower oil, safflower oil, olive oil, nuts and egg yolk.

Other reasons why you may need more

Vitamin E is sensitive to heat and light. Choose cold pressed oils that are stored away from direct sunlight and heat.

You may need more if you have a fat malabsorption condition such as cystic fibrosis, coeliac disease or pancreatic disease. In addition people with an inherited isolated vitamin E deficiency (rare inborn error of vitamin E metabolism) exposure to pollution and smokers may require more vitamin E.

Safety notes

If you suffer bleeding disorders or vitamin K deficiency always consult your healthcare professional before supplementing with vitamin E.

Stop supplementing with vitamin E at least 2 weeks prior to any surgery.

Adverse effects – supplementing with very high doses (more than 1200 IU/day) include nausea, gas, diarrhoea, and heart palpitations.

Hypertension – some individuals may show an increase in blood pressure if starting a dose of vitamin E that is too high. Starting at 100 IU daily and gradually increase

to a maximum of 400 IU/daily. Monitor blood pressure. Always consult your healthcare professional if you are pregnant or while breastfeeding.

THIS INFORMATION IS NOT INTENDED TO TREAT OR DIAGNOSE. ALWAYS CONSULT YOUR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL BEFORE TAKING NUTRITIONAL OR HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS.