

Vitamins Benefiting Your Health—Get The Facts

(NAPSA)—Many Americans are making new promises to themselves about their health. The past decade has seen a dramatic increase in the number of people wanting to take responsibility for their own health and greater interest in the role played by diet in maintaining good health. It has also seen a growing increase in the number of nutritional supplements available and the possible benefits.

“Recent research on vitamins and other nutritional supplements is very positive,” explains Rite Aid pharmacist Sarah Matunis, R.Ph. “Studies have shown that they promote better health. It’s clear that many of us can benefit from supplements at certain times in our lives.”

Nutritional supplements may be especially important for individuals whose dietary intake is inadequate, women in their childbearing years, young children, adolescents, the elderly, vegetarians, those dieting and people who drink or smoke excessively. Beyond treating deficiencies, evidence is emerging that some supplements may help manage or prevent heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, and other chronic diseases.

Folic acid, Matunis explains, is one supplement that has been shown to prevent defects in unborn children when taken by pregnant women. Calcium is another supplement that provides benefits to children who are still growing and especially to women as they age and suffer from bone loss. Studies have also shown that vitamin E and certain fatty acids, such as fish oil, may prevent heart disease. It is also believed that a diet consisting of antioxidant vitamins and zinc reduces risk of vision loss from age-related macu-



lar degeneration, a leading cause of blindness.

Evidence is certainly growing that some supplements may be beneficial, but for maximum efficacy and to prevent adverse reactions or toxicity, caution must be exercised when taking supplements. The proliferation of products now widely available is often confusing. Keep these tips in mind:

- It’s important to read product labels, follow recommended dosages, heed all warnings and to consult a doctor or pharmacist, especially if taking any medications or undergoing treatment for a specific medical condition.

- Avoid taking too many supplements at a time to prevent or reduce the risk of supplements interfering and interacting with one another.

- Most importantly, supplements should never be used as an alternative to healthy lifestyle and diet, which remain fundamental prerequisites for a healthy life.

- Finally, remember that supplements may be used to protect against illnesses and aid recovery, but cannot cure diseases.

Being well-informed is an important priority. Asking a Rite Aid pharmacist can be one way to get good advice.

For more information on vitamins and nutritional supplements, or to find the location of the nearest Rite Aid pharmacist, visit www.riteaid.com.