

Kids diets and supplements: More complex than we thought

By ACSH Staff — July 10, 2012

Children are often encouraged to take vitamins in order to supplement their diets, yet a recent study [found](#) [1] that, even among the nearly 40 percent of kids who take supplements, more than a third failed to get sufficient levels of some nutrients, especially calcium and vitamin D.

For the study, published in the *Journal of Pediatrics*, researchers analyzed mineral and vitamin intake from more than 7,000 U.S. children between the ages of two and 18 from 2003 to 2006. Led by an epidemiologist from the National Institutes of Health, they found that most kids under eight actually received most of the nutrients they needed from their diet, even if they were taking a supplement.

And though the harms of consuming excess amounts of certain nutrients remain unknown, the study did find that children were overloading on certain nutrients such as iron, vitamin A, zinc, and folate, thus leading the authors to suggest that perhaps vitamin manufacturers should reformulate their products to better match kids needs.

For some nutrients, this study indicates that there s a mismatch between what nutrients children need and what they re getting either from dietary sources or from supplements, notes ACSH's Dr. Ruth Kava. Of most concern is the lower intake of calcium and vitamin D nutrients important for bone growth during the formative years.

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