

ORGANIC LIVING

By

Robert Rodale

The Myth Of The
Balanced Diet

When a Seattle drug store recently ran a series of ads extolling the benefits of vitamin tablets, the Federal Trade Commission reacted quickly. It insisted that a series of "corrective" ads be aired on TV, stating, "There is no need for most people to supplement their diet with vitamins and minerals."

Do we really live in a nutritional Utopia, where every vital nutrient we need is supplied automatically in our food? "If this were uncontested truth, written in stone, it might be possible to pass it over as just one more interesting news event," remarked the editors of "Advertising Age". "But we are not all sure this description of the role of vitamins and minerals is so non-controversial that it should be incorporated into a FTC-approved corrective ad, and disseminated to the public as authoritative truth."

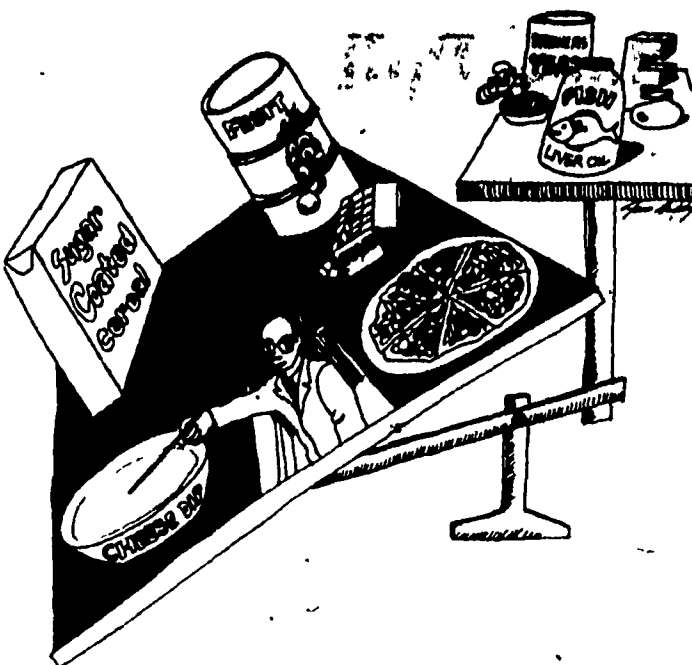
The Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs has evidence to the contrary. According to its study of American eating habits, there has been a significant decline in consumption of protein, phosphorus, iron, vitamin A, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, vitamins B6 and B12, and other nutrients.

Another study, conducted by Ohio State University and involving 3,444 children in 12 northern states, revealed that a majority were not getting enough iron. Even more significant was the conclusion of Professor Virginia M. Vivian, a home economist at that school: "Nutrient supplements, primarily some form of vitamin, were widely used. Without them, many children would have had diets below recommended allowances in vitamin C, thiamin, and vitamin A, although foods rich in these nutrients were readily available."

In effect, the government is saying people don't need food supplements if they eat a balanced diet. "But we know that maybe 50 percent of the population doesn't eat a balanced diet," says lawyer and nutrition crusader James Turner.

Many people go astray by blindly relying on the time-worn advice of nutritionists to eat foods from the so-called four basic food groups each day. Seventy-five years ago, before the advent of most modern food processing, such advice might have guaranteed a balanced diet.

But what happens, for instance, if the food you select from the cereal grains group is one of today's highly-processed, devitalized breakfast cereals, stripped of its natural



nutrients in the refining process and loaded with sugar? Or spongy white bread devoid of the wheat germ and bran?

If your children consume frozen French fries, onion rings, potato chips, and canned fruit punches (containing up to 90 percent water), they may be getting their daily servings from the fruits and vegetables group, but are they getting the nutrients you would assume?

Similar poor choices could be made from the other two groups, such as additive-laden, processed spread cheese (dairy group) and fatty, watery frankfurters (meat group). And what about imitation bacon bits, pizza pie, food sticks and all those other modern concoctions that fall into the gray area between that standard food groups?

It's no wonder so many Americans are having difficulty balancing their diets . . . unless they take extra vitamins and minerals daily. But don't think of natural dietary supplements as "pills" or "drugs," because they're not. Food supplements are concentrated food sources, in handy tablet form. Here's a rundown of some of the most popular supplements:

Bone meal. Made from finely-ground, sterilized cattle bones, bone meal is an excellent source of calcium. It contains both phosphorus and calcium in the best ratio for effective absorption by the body. You can buy bone meal in tablet form, and take a couple with each meal.

Brewer's yeast. This outstanding source of B vitamins is available in two forms. As a powder, it can be mixed into soups or sprinkled on foods. But many people find the yeasty taste a bit strong, and so prefer to swallow tablets instead.

Vitamin E. Many modern cereal products and baked goods lose some of their vitamin E in the refining process. Natural vitamin E is derived from vegetable oils, and comes in small clear capsules or perles.

Desiccated liver. For those who don't like the taste of fresh liver, or don't want to be bothered serving it several times a week, desiccated liver is a godsend. The fat is removed in the

low-heat, drying process, but the B vitamins, iron and other nutrients of liver are retained in concentrated form.

Dolomite. Mined from deep, mountain limestone deposits, dolomite supplies a generous helping of magnesium (and some calcium) in tablet form. Modern refined diets are often lacking in magnesium, good sources such as nuts are generally shunned by the weight-conscious.

Fish liver oil. These tasteless, odorless capsules are a much more pleasant way to get your vitamin A than a spoonful of cod liver oil, but they work the same way. The vitamin A is often derived from halibut liver oil; an even richer source than cod liver oil.

Rose hips and vitamin C. The fruit of the rose is an astonishingly rich source of vitamin C, as many Europeans know. The rose hips are prepared in powder form before being added to the tablets.

Kelp. A type of Pacific Ocean seaweed, kelp supplies iodine and other important trace minerals found naturally in sea water. If you buy the granular form, you can sprinkle it on salads as a seasoning.

Find out more about food supplements and their importance by reading the 46-page illustrated booklet, "The Prevention System for Better Health." To get your copy, send 50 cents to Robert Rodale, Organic Living, in care of this newspaper. Please ask for the booklet by name and allow four weeks for delivery.

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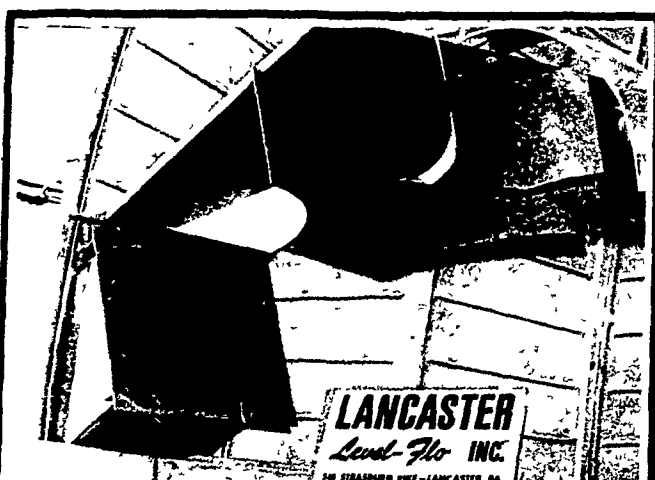
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