

ZINC

"Optimum nutrition is the medicine of tomorrow." – Linus Pauling

Basics

- Essential functions include the development of immune cells, wound healing, vitamin A metabolism, hemoglobin production, protein and collagen synthesis
- Take zinc daily with food, as the body can't store it. Avoid taking it with calcium or iron, as they interfere with absorption
- Recommended intake:
Female: 8 mg/day
Male: 11 mg/day
Do not exceed 40 mg/day
- Essential for brain, heart, liver, lungs, pancreas, kidneys, bone and muscle function

Zinc deficiency

- Low energy, depression
- Impaired taste and smell, thinning hair/baldness
- Slow wound healing, skin rashes, acne, frequent infection, anemia
- White spots in fingernails



Prevention strategies

- Foods rich in zinc include seafood, red meat, poultry, nuts, whole grains, and legumes. Vegetarians are at higher risk of deficiency due to the lack of meat in their diet and few plant foods containing zinc. While beans and whole grains provide some zinc, they also contain lectins that bind to zinc and hinder its absorption. Low levels of zinc are also associated with gluten intolerance and celiac disease.
- Chronic alcohol consumption worsens zinc deficiency by impairing absorption and increasing zinc excretion.
- Aging is associated with reduced zinc status, weakening the immune system, increasing infection risk, and promoting chronic inflammation. While zinc is essential, more is not better when it comes supplementation as zinc level is impacted by copper level.