

Do the prescriptions you take decrease your nutrients?

If you watch any TV at all, you probably know that taking statins –medication to lower your cholesterol -- also lowers your Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) levels. But did you know that if you're also taking antidepressants, they do the same, as well as lower vitamin B2? Coenzyme Q10 is an antioxidant that helps cells protect against damage. Low levels of CoQ10 weaken the immune system, leaving you with low energy levels. If you are taking a statin or a red yeast rice supplement your CoQ10 levels should be monitored.

Taking antihypertensive medications for high blood pressure depletes other nutrients, including vitamin B1, B6, and zinc. Antacids, another huge million-dollar seller depletes vitamin B12, folic acid, vitamin D, calcium, iron and zinc. If you read the label on most antacids, they caution you not to take longer than a few months, even though many people use them for years. Talk to your health care practitioner about possible underlying issues.

Oral contraceptives, which most of the younger women take for many years, deplete vitamin B1, B2, B3, B6, B12, folic acid, vitamin C, magnesium, selenium and zinc.

Anti-inflammatories such as corticosteroids and prednisone deplete calcium, magnesium, zinc, selenium, chromium, vitamin D, vitamin C and B vitamins. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDS, such as Motrin, Advil, Aleve, etc., decrease folic acid.

With the rise in diabetes, many people are on a popular drug called Metformin. Metformin depletes CoQ10, vitamin B12 and folic acid.

Antibiotics including penicillin lower vitamin K and B vitamins, while tetracyclines deplete calcium, magnesium, iron, vitamin B6 and zinc. Antibiotics do just what they are named for—they are antibacterial, eliminating most of the bad and good bacteria in your gastrointestinal tract. They may also cause bloating, gas, decreased digestion and absorption. A probiotic will repopulate your gastrointestinal tract with good bacteria.

Eating a healthy diet including fish, poultry, lean meat, legumes and 11 servings of vegetables and fruit, will provide many of the vitamins and minerals that are imperative for your body to function. When taking any of the above medications, discuss monitoring your vitamin and mineral levels with your health care practitioner and supplement if necessary.