

Are Gummy Vitamins Effective?

Taayoo Murray | April 25, 2022



They look like candy. They taste like candy. But, these dietary supplements can be part of a healthy lifestyle...or can they?

Gummy vitamins are marketed as a way for children—or adults—to get the nutrients they need. But are gummy vitamins effective? To find out if they are as effective as traditional tablets, we asked the experts.

Do gummy vitamins work?

Yes, gummy vitamins do “work,” but they may not be as potent as their traditional counterparts.

“Gummy vitamins contain less vitamins and minerals than chewable and non-chewable forms,” says [Odelia Lewis, MD](#), a medical contributor to [ABC News Medical Unit](#). However, because of that, they also are easier for your body—and your stomach!—to absorb.

The reason gummies are less potent is twofold. First, to achieve the brightly colored, chewy texture, manufacturers add a lot of other ingredients, sugar substitutes, and fillers and that leaves less room for the nutritious stuff.

The second reason is because gummy vitamins are harder to manufacture in a way that keeps them shelf stable. Meaning, they can lose nutritional potency quickly.

[Independent ConsumerLab analyses](#) found that gummy vitamins often don’t contain all the nutrients they claim on their label, or in some cases, they may have more of certain vitamins than is on the label, such as folic acid. “However, they are also more bioavailable than tablet



forms of vitamins,” says Dr. Lewis. In other words, they’re not just easier to stomach, they could be more effectively absorbed by your body.

All that being said, if you can’t take the regular version of supplements and are vitamin-deficient, gummy supplements may be better than no supplements at all.

Pros and cons of gummy vitamins

There are health benefits and downsides to adding gummy vitamins to your wellness routine.

Pro: Easy to take

For people who can’t swallow or stomach pills, gummy vitamins are there to fill the gap. They can be especially enticing for children who refuse to eat their vegetables, but will accept a gummy multivitamin. Or, if adults struggle to remember to take another daily pill, a sweet treat after dinner can be a more manageable addition to your routine.

Con: Easy to over-consume

Because of the ease and tastiness of gummies, it could lead to taking too many. “It is possible to develop toxic levels of some vitamins if too many gummy vitamins are taken within a short period,” says Dr. Lewis. “The fat soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K are prone to rise to toxic levels because excess amounts are stored in fat cells instead of being excreted in the urine like water-soluble vitamins.”

The risk of toxicity is especially high in children. “Young children view gummy vitamins as candy and may eat a handful,” says [Robert Huizenga, MD](#), an internist and associate professor of clinical medicine at UCLA.

Pro: Flavorful

Gummy vitamins lack an aftertaste or smell compared to chewable and non-chewable vitamins. Compare a fruity gummy vitamin smell to the scent of a fish oil pill. Instead, gummies are fruity and candy-like.

Con: Added ingredients

Vitamins in pill form have no calories and generally don’t contain sugar. Gummy vitamins contain several grams of added sugar, 3 to 8 grams of sugar per serving, which has a negative effect for people with diabetes.

“Gummy vitamins resemble fruit drinks: vitamins and minerals delivered with sugar and sometimes food dyes,” says Dr. Huizenga.

To add sweetness without the carbohydrates, the sugar-free variety of vitamin gummies may contain sugar alcohols and artificial sweeteners, which have been tied to [digestive issues](#) for people prone to gas or diarrhea. The added food coloring has been linked to [behavioral issues](#)



in kids. Additionally, gelatin used to give them their texture may exclude them from a vegan diet.

Pro: More easily absorbed

Gummy vitamins may have a higher bioavailability than non-chewable vitamins. Meaning, they are absorbed more easily by your body.

Con: Lacking nutrients

Vitamins and dietary supplements are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) like medications, so there is no guarantee it has the ingredients, the amount of the ingredients, or the benefits the packaging touts.

On top of that, minerals such as iron are harder to incorporate in the gummy vitamin form and have a distinct metallic taste. This can be a problem for segments of the population that are iron deficient and are depending on gummy vitamins to fill that gap. Over time, iron deficiency can lead to heart disease or difficult pregnancies.

Alternatives to gummy vitamins

If you are vitamin deficient and gummy vitamins aren't the right choice, try the following:

- **Eat a well-balanced diet.** Your eating plan should include a variety of fresh vegetables and fruits along with whole wheat grains, nuts and lean protein sources, preferably low mercury fish. You could easily get the recommended amount of each vitamin through diet rather than vitamin supplements.
- **Try liquid, pill, or chewable vitamins.** They don't taste as good as gummy vitamins, but they can pack more of a nutritional punch. Ask your healthcare provider what type of vitamin is best for your dietary needs.
- **Take vitamins with food.** Eating a small snack before swallowing them can decrease side effects, like nausea.

Do I need to take vitamins?

"If you have a balanced diet that contains a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, there shouldn't really be a need for vitamins," says Dr. Lewis. This is true of traditional vitamins and gummies—for adults and children.

According to the Mayo Clinic, if your child is growing normally and has no nutrient deficiencies, they likely won't benefit from a daily multivitamin. There are special populations who require supplements, such as people with gastrointestinal disease or pregnant women. People taking certain medications, such as certain heartburn medications, immunosuppressants, and even metformin, may also benefit from a vitamin. Others only require a vitamin if they are proven deficient.



If your child lives in a community with water without fluoride supplementation, fluoride supplementation is needed. Children (from 6 month through age 12 years) should have fluoride vitamins to help teeth have less cavities later in life. Your local water company should know the amount of fluoride in your water.

Blood tests are rarely needed, but are also the best way to determine if you have a vitamin or mineral deficiency. Gum disease and small red skin bruises signal scurvy from low vitamin C. Or, diarrhea and dermatitis are signs of pellagra from low B3. Low vitamin D can manifest as fatigue, bone pain, muscle pain, depression, and frequent infections. Symptoms of low vitamin B-12 include fatigue, pale skin, headaches, balance issues, difficulty concentrating, and tingling/numbness in hands and/or feet. However, all of these vitamin deficiencies are uncommon in the United States today.

While there are some claims there is a link between severe or critical COVID-19 disease and low vitamin D levels, there is not sufficient evidence to show that supplementing with vitamin D can prevent someone from getting COVID. Two other vitamins that are often tried in ill COVID patients are zinc and vitamin C but have not shown benefit in medical studies.

<https://www.singlecare.com/blog/are-gummy-vitamins-effective/>