

More Vitamins

HEALTH TIPS FROM THE POSSE
BY MARK RACKAY

My wife loaded me up in the truck, under the pretense of going out for lunch, when in fact, it was for yet another doctor appointment. I have reached the age that I go to the doctor to find out there is yet another organ not working. This time it was the eye doctor.

After the usual plethora of tests, he concluded I need stronger glasses, more tests, eye drops, and an additional vitamin and mineral for my dry eyes. He said I need Omega-3, fish oil, on a daily basis. Another supplement to my already huge daily intake.

My daily dose of vitamin and mineral supplements have increased in size over the years. What was once a handful is now a cereal bowl full. I should eat them with milk and sugar. It wasn't always like that.

As a kid, my grandmother set out a multi-vitamin for me every morning. The brand was Chocks, the chewable vitamin. I probably lost half the readers with the Chocks reference, but those who remember, Chocks was like chewing sawdust and powdered dirt clods. I washed it down with a glass of Tang, like the Astronauts drank, which was orange flavored sugar water, if I recall correctly.

My doc, who is several decades younger than yours truly, is a believer in vitamins for active outdoor people. As an outdoor person himself, he feels that since most people do not eat a proper diet, supplements are necessary to keep things like the immune system healthy. At the very least, he recommends everyone start their day with a high-quality multi-vitamin, with high amounts of the B and C vitamins in it. By high quality, look for something that has been tested for content, not necessarily the discount brand. Many supplements do not deliver what it says on the label.

Vitamins play an important role in our overall health. Lack of vitamins can lead to a huge assortment of diseases and immune system breakdowns. A well-known deficiency disease of recent centuries is scurvy, now gone by the wayside with leprosy and other old-time diseases. Scurvy is caused by a deficiency of vitamin C, and vitamin C is needed to make collagen, the connective tissue that holds your cells together. A lack of this vitamin can cause a breakdown of tendons, ligaments, bones and blood vessels.

The demands we put on our body with backpack trips, high-mileage hikes, and long-term outdoor adventures can quickly deplete your bodies stores of calories and nutrients. Add to that inadequate recovery time for those muscles and joints to heal, and staying up late around the campfire, your risk of injury and illness greatly increases.

Studies have shown that vitamin D and antioxidants improve outdoor performance and the associated recovery time. Vitamin D increases muscle strength, improve bone health, reduce fractures, and can help lower injury rates. If you are aerobically active, studies suggest daily vitamin



D supplements may improve aerobic capacity. At our altitude, every little bit helps.

Antioxidants support a strong immune system, and quench the free radicals that create inflammation, which exacerbates both illnesses like stomach bugs and overuse injuries common to hikers and backpackers. Vitamin C and

E have been shown to reduce oxidative stress which can damage muscles and cause fatigue.

Another antioxidant we hear a great deal about is Coenzyme Q10, or CoQ10 as it is called on the street. A daily dose of this may help reduce oxidative stress and help your muscles recover faster. This helps when you are recreating for a

longer period of time, such as hunting or extended backpacking trips.

There are scores of other vitamins and minerals to consider, such as vitamin A that promotes healthy tissues, vision, and helps your body with oxygen access. The B vitamins are the most important, for my money, because they are essential for energy and cell production.

I have always told myself that calories don't count on hunting and fishing trips, convincing myself that a half bag of cookies and 3 donuts is satisfactory for breakfast. While you might get away with that on a short trip, say of a week or less in duration, and you are a normal healthy person. A longer trip might give you some problems. Most bodies store enough nutrients to last through a short trip. However, if your trip is longer in duration, or fairly physical, you may be compromising your health.

Most people rely on calorie-rich foods like candy bars, power bars, and potato chips. While these foods are fine for the short trip, they are seriously lacking over the long haul. Calorie-rich foods usually contain plenty of carbohydrates and offer energy but lack the nutrients needed to prevent injuries.

On the mountain, we don't have access to the piles of fresh fruit and vegetables we have at home. As a consequence, our levels of the antioxidants these foods provide are missing. These antioxidants are what keep down inflammations and helps prevent injuries and illnesses.

It is important to include a healthy mix of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins in your diet, especially when on an outdoor adventure. For example, carbohydrates from dried fruits, fats from olive oil or coconut oil, and proteins from beans, nuts, or a grass-fed meats and fish, are far better for you than half a bag of cookies, and 3 donuts.

Taking the proper vitamin and mineral supplements is something you need to discuss with your doctor. Explain to your doc the demands you put on your body with your chosen recreational activities, and let the doc make recommendations to you for your own situation. Remember that the supplements don't work overnight, and that you need to take them every day, not just on the big trip.

My wife is telling me to load up in the truck because we are heading to the Outdoor store to look at a new line of hunting clothing, but I am rather suspicious of her intentions. I have a gut feeling that we may be going to another doctor appointment. I am starting to feel like our dogs, who we load up into the truck under the pretense of a "car ride" when they are really going to the vet.

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MRH Sleep Clinic expands access with new provider, board certification

Additions help reduce wait times and increase appointment availability

The Montrose Regional Health (MRH) Sleep Clinic, located at 900 S. Fourth St., continues to expand access to specialized sleep care for patients across the Western Slope.

Paula Morgan, a nurse practitioner, joined MRH on Feb. 27, 2026. Morgan earned her Bachelor of Science from Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. She is board certified by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners and holds Basic Life Support certification. Morgan brings 12 years of experience in sleep medicine and will work alongside Dr. Gilbert and Dr. Salem to support growing demand for sleep medicine services in the

region.

"My husband and I fell in love with Montrose during a visit last year, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve this community," Morgan said. "Sleep disorders affect nearly every aspect of a person's health and daily life. I look forward to helping patients experience the life-changing benefits of restorative sleep."

In addition, Amr Salem, MD, recently earned board certification in sleep medicine from the American Board of Internal Medicine. Board certification reflects advanced training and expertise in diagnosing and treating sleep disorders. The addition of a second provider will help reduce wait times and expand appointment availability for patients seeking evaluation and treatment.

The MRH Sleep Clinic offers home



and in-lab sleep studies, as well as iron deficiency testing. Treatment options include cognitive behavioral therapy, continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy for obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), and Inspire therapy, an implantable alternative for eligible patients. Surgical options are available for severe cases when less invasive



treatments are unsuccessful. In addition to treating OSA, the clinic provides care for insomnia, narcolepsy, parasomnia, and restless legs syndrome.

The MRH Sleep Clinic provides comprehensive evaluation and treatment for a wide range of sleep disorders. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (970) 240-7101 or visit montrosehealth.com/sleep.