

# Pills instead of vegetables?

Tablets, capsules and powders – the market for vitamin products is huge and continues to grow. A representative survey by the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) shows what the population thinks about vitamins and their intake via food supplements.



## 1 in 3

of the respondents mention a high vitamin content as a **typical characteristic of healthy food**. The fact that healthy food is natural and unprocessed follows with a greater distance in second place (24%).



## 24 %

Just under a quarter think that food supplements are important to cover the vitamin needs of the human body. Fruits and vegetables, on the other hand, are listed as the most important sources of vitamins (93% and 94%).





## Once a week

35 per cent report taking vitamins via food supplements at least once a week.

**The most common:** vitamin D, vitamin B12 and vitamin C.



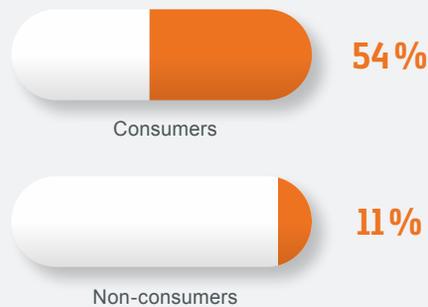
17 %

rate the **health risk** of vitamins as food supplements as high – a **potential overdose** is mentioned most frequently.

**Underlying study:**  
Representative online survey with 1,023 people (German-speaking population aged 16 and above) in November 2021

## Vitamins as food supplements

Vitamins from A to K: they strengthen our immune system, promote the development of cells, bones and teeth and are essential for many bodily functions. In healthy people who eat a varied diet, an undersupply of vitamins is very rare. On the contrary, the health risk of oversupply increases if high doses of vitamins are taken without a medical recommendation. Food supplements are food and are not subject to approval for the German market. Nevertheless, they must not endanger health – the responsibility for this lies with the food companies. So far, only non-binding regulations exist on how high the maximum levels of vitamins in food supplements should be. To provide a basis for future legal regulations at the EU level, the BfR has issued recommendations for maximum levels of vitamins in food supplements.



More than half of all respondents who consume vitamins via food supplements attribute a **high health benefit** to them. Among those who do not consume them, only about one in ten does so. The main benefits mentioned are **compensation of deficiencies** and **protection from or overcoming diseases**.

**More information:**  
[www.bfr.bund.de/en](http://www.bfr.bund.de/en) > Publications > BfR Consumer Monitor > BfR Consumer Monitor 2021, Vitamins as food supplements

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