

S H E E R L U X E

DIET & HEALTH

6 Vitamin C Myths Debunked



It's the first thing many of us reach for when we're feeling run down, but there's more to vitamin C than a quick-fix immunity boost. From supercharging collagen production to improving overall energy, here's why this health all-rounder is one to stock up on...

MYTH: *It Wards Off Colds*

FACT: A major meta-analysis by health database the Cochrane Library considered all studies looking at the impact of taking supplements on the common cold. The results revealed if you take vitamin C regularly, you'll probably get the same number of colds, but they won't last quite as long. But timing is key. The Cochrane Report suggests taking high doses of vitamin C after you start to show cold symptoms has no effect on the duration or severity of the cold itself. The bottom line? "Aim for a preventative dose of 500-1000mg as soon as you start to feel run down," advises Dr Johanna Ward, Founder of ZENii Skincare.

MYTH: *The More Vitamin C, The Better*

FACT: Yes and no. "The recommended daily dose of vitamin C for an adult is 70-90mg (smokers need around 120mg) but many doctors agree the recommended level is low and higher doses are beneficial. Anything up to 1000mg a day will be absorbed and tolerated by the body, but any surplus will be lost in urine because vitamin C is water soluble. You'll know if your dose is too high because once you reach the threshold, you may suffer from diarrhoea and stomach cramps," says Dr Ward. Dr Jenny Goodman, author of *Staying Alive in Toxic Times*, also believes we could benefit from a higher dose, saying 80mg is enough to ward off scurvy but not enough to ward off infections. It's an often ignored fact that the vitamin C we ingest is destroyed by tea, coffee, alcohol, paracetamol and stress, too.

MYTH: *Our Bodies Produce Vitamin C*

FACT: Vitamin C is essential for so many reasons, but our bodies don't produce it. That's why it's important to make sure we're getting enough of it from external sources, whether that be in food or via a supplement. "Humans lost their ability to manufacture vitamin C somewhere along the evolutionary path so it's absolutely crucial to include it in our diet every single day," explains Dr Ward.

MYTH: *All Supplements Were Created Equal*

FACT: Dr Goodman warns against the astonishing amounts of fillers, binding agents, thickeners and preservatives added to thousands of supplements. Her advice? Take your time to read the ingredients list on a supplement and avoid buying in the supermarket or chemist (try a health food shop instead). Dr Ward also advises trying liposomal vitamin C, which uses clever technology to boost absorption. Liposomal technology delivers the vitamin – in this case vitamin C – directly to cells. Look to brands like Altrient C and Your Zooki for high-quality liposomal supplements.

MYTH: *It's only beneficial for immunity*

FACT: Vitamin C is integral to our health, helping to support not just immunity but also energy levels and glowing skin. As Norton explains, vitamin C is crucial when it comes to keeping us feeling alert and well: "The highest concentration of vitamin C is actually found in the adrenal glands, providing the ingredients to make the hormones cortisol and adrenaline. These hormones tend to get a bit of negative press when we label them as 'stress' hormones; but cortisol and adrenaline are both essential for energy and a healthy nervous and immune system." Dr Ward also champions vitamin C as one of the most potent antioxidants, saying it can help to fight free radicals to ward off inflammation and disease. Vitamin C is also a vital co-factor for collagen production, so a healthy intake will keep skin strong and luminous with a more youthful appearance.