

GOOD FOR YOU

Are nutritional supplements worth taking? Four health and wellness experts weigh in and tell *Hello!* what works for them **By Andrea Karr**



'Commit as much as possible to eating a healthy diet, getting regular exercise, maintaining a healthy weight and avoiding smoking,' recommends Dr. Li. 'I try to regularly consume avocados, spinach, chicken and bananas, plus blueberries and strawberries for vitamin K'

If you're tapped into social media, you've likely been inundated with posts from celebrities and influencers promoting everything from matcha energy gummies (Kourtney Kardashian and her brand Lemme) to vitamin packs (Gwyneth Paltrow's Goop). But there are conflicting reports about the benefits. So what do the health experts believe? And are they taking collagen powder or vitamin gummies to enhance their own routines? Here, four Canadian wellness authorities share what works for them and why you should consult a family physician, dietitian or naturopathic doctor before you integrate supplements into your own life.

DR. MONICA LI @drmonicali

Dermatologist Dr. Monica Li takes vitamin D (in line with her profession, she limits her sun exposure) and calcium citrate (she's lactose-sensitive so avoids dairy). But she advises caution. "Supplements have health benefits only in the right context, like if an individual has vitamin or mineral deficiencies." They may also help at certain life stages – for example, if a person is trying to get pregnant. She's not a fan of collagen powders – "consuming collagen will not reduce wrinkles or improve skin laxity." And when it comes to biotin (a.k.a. vitamin B7), the ingredient commonly found in nail and hair gummies, she warns that evidence of its effectiveness is weak and inconclusive, and it can even interfere with certain lab tests.



Genestra Brands D3 2500, \$19 for 90 capsules, atriumpro.ca

FROM TOP: GETTY IMAGES; CHRISTINE PIENAAR



'Aim for one gram of protein for each pound of body weight,' says Torrie. 'If you're 150 pounds, have 150 grams of protein each day'

TORRIE BORLAND @torriefit

Personal trainer Torrie Borland, whose clients include former Olympic ice dancer Tessa Virtue, believes that some supplements can be useful for body composition and performance goals – and the most important one is protein. "People, especially women, don't have enough protein in their diets," says Torrie. "And it's such an important macronutrient if your goal is to get leaner, lose weight or build muscle." When she's unable to eat a full meal after a workout, she'll have whey isolate powder in a shake to keep her protein high. She also uses caffeine, whether in the form of coffee or a pre-workout supplement, to "increase focus and energy" when she exercises in the morning. There are a few other supplements she takes – from branched-chain amino acids for muscle recovery to glucosamine for joint protection when she's doing high-impact training – but the only one she actively recommends to her clients is protein. ▶



Optimum Nutrition Gold Standard 100% Whey Protein Powder in Double Rich Chocolate, \$70 for 2 lb, amazon.ca

DR. MONICA VERMANI @drmonicavermani

For clinical psychologist Dr. Monica Vermani, "quality self-care is all about maximizing our four sources of energy: food, sleep, breath [exercise and movement] and a calm state of mind." She prioritizes these areas of her life, but she also goes to a naturopath for advice about her unique nutrition needs. "I use a vitamin D supplement and a SAD [seasonal affective disorder] light box every morning from September to May to make up for the lack of sunlight." She also takes magnesium citrate with calcium to assist with healthy bowels and muscle soreness from working out, plus vitamin C as an immune booster. But just because these supplements work for her doesn't mean that they're appropriate for everyone. "We're all such unique beings," she says. In all aspects of health and wellness, "different things work for different people."



Wholistic by AOR Magnesium Citrate, \$25 for 180 capsules, amazon.ca

'Just because you buy it over the counter without a prescription doesn't mean it's safe and healthy,' says Dr. Vermani. Natural supplements can still have side-effects and may interact with prescription medications. 'If you're taking supplements, make sure that you tell your family doctor. Google is not a doctor.'

FROM LEFT: PURE STUDIOS; DAVE LAUS





'There's a huge difference between every brand, formula and dosage,' says Kate. 'Speaking with a natural health-care practitioner is essential for getting the most benefits from supplements.'

KATE TAYLOR MARTIN

@nutbar.co

Having studied at the Institute of Holistic Nutrition, Kate Taylor Martin takes a "food-forward approach" to maintaining her health. The founder and CEO of Nutbar, a healthy café alternative with four locations in Toronto, says she's historically used just "a few basic supplements, like vitamin D and probiotics, to support my already healthy habits," which include eating high-quality fish for healthy fats like omega-3s and adding "nutrient bombs like bee pollen, spirulina and chaga." However, when a recent blood test showed that many of her key levels were unbalanced, she turned to a naturopath for assistance. "I had three babies relatively close together," she says. "That, coupled with COVID and running a business, took a toll on my body. I needed very specific supplements – like those used for adrenal support – in therapeutic doses to get back on track." **H**



Genuine Health Advanced Gut Health Women's Daily Probiotic, \$45 for 30 capsules, genuinehealth.ca

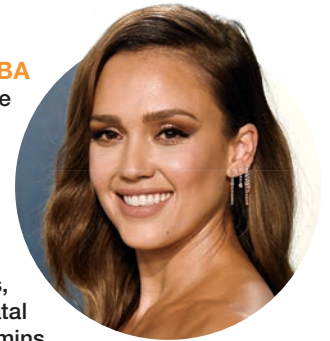
STAR TREATMENT

Curious about which stars have jumped on the supplement bandwagon? These four famous faces all have their own brands. Just remember to ask your doctor which ones are right for you!



KATE HUDSON

Actress Kate drinks smoothies filled with herbal powders from her company InBloom. The lineup features supplements that aim to improve sleep, immunity and focus and can be blended with hot or cold liquids.



JESSICA ALBA

Jessica's The Honest Company is famous for its gentle, eco-friendly baby products, but it also offers supplements, including prenatal and postnatal vitamins.



NAOMI WATTS

The 54-year-old actress has been open about her menopause journey and launched her brand, Stripes, last year to help other women. It has items like Vag of Honor hydrating gel and The Inside Addition daily supplements.



KOURTNEY KARDASHIAN

The reality-TV star and founder of lifestyle website Poosh is all about her latest business venture: Lemme, a range of wellness gummies and drops.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: ERIN LEYDON; DANIELE VENTURELLI/GETTY IMAGES; DAVID CROTTY/GETTY IMAGES; JON KOPALOFF/GETTY IMAGES; JEFF KRAVITZ/GETTY IMAGES