

# A Prescription for Vitamins? Minerals?

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Can you imagine what it would be like to have to get a prescription from your doctor in order to buy Vitamin C or Vitamin E or Calcium or Magnesium? Can you imagine the added cost to your healthcare of having to make an appointment with your doctor to get such a prescription? And, what if your doctor said, "I don't believe in vitamins so I'm not going to write a prescription for you?" What if vitamins and minerals were so tightly controlled by the FDA that you had no other recourse, but to try to get them by prescription from a recalcitrant physician who "doesn't believe in vitamins?" How would you feel if maintaining your energy, your health and your immune system were entirely dependent on such a dysfunctional health care system?

Obviously, having freedom of choice in healthcare is a critical issue. In fact, our very survival may be dependent on having free choices in regard to healthcare, especially in regard to selecting vitamins and minerals at reasonable prices without the added cost of seeing a medical doctor for a prescription.

As far back as 1936, the U.S. Senate reported that our soils were already so depleted that our food supply could no longer provide the same amount of nutrients as in previous generations! The nutritional situation is far worse today than it was in 1936. Our foods can keep most of us from feeling hungry all the time, but this does not mean that our food supply contains adequate amounts of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients to properly nourish and energize our cells and tissues. Most of us have full bellies while we are slowly starving to death from inadequate nutritional support from foods.

For decades, organized medicine and many medical doctors have debunked nutritional supplements and dismissed their importance for maintaining health or preventing disease. In doing so, they have overlooked a basic truism of modern day life. Next to air and water, food and nutrition are absolutely vital for a person's health and well-being. Vitamins and minerals are essential for a strong immune system. Air, water, food and good nutrition are essential to support life.

Given the sad nutritional state of our food supply today, vitamins, minerals, amino acids, herbs, and other food supplements are no longer supplement luxuries. These nutritional supplements are really an essential extension of our basic food supply. As such, a very convincing case can be made that, today, in order to maintain optimal health, energy, and a strong immune system, virtually everyone needs some type of nutritional supplements added to their diet. Therefore, these food supplements should not be as tightly controlled and regulated as are artificial and dangerous medicinal drugs and medications. Drugs and medications are invented and patented by pharmaceutical company chemists for monopolistic control and big profits. Certainly, standards of quality and proper labeling are warranted for nutritional supplements. But, it is critical for people's freedom of choice in health maintenance that they have easy and inexpensive access to good quality food supplements of their own choosing.

Given the fact that foods and food supplements can have a “drug“-like effect on the body, speeding up or slowing down metabolism, affecting blood sugar levels, heart rate, etc., the argument can be made that anything having to do with food and nutrition falls entirely within the domain of medicine and medical practice in the very broadest sense of the terms. Under this paradigm, anything a person can ingest can have a drug-like effect on the body and therefore, could conceivably fall within the broadest domain of medicine. Taking this position to its logical, but absurd conclusion, no person should be permitted to buy any foods or beverages without a medical evaluation and a prescription! Obviously then, under this absurd paradigm, every food and beverage choice should require a medical evaluation, consultation and a prescription! A person should then need a prescription in order to buy foods and beverages at the grocery store since these products could conceivably affect our medical status. For the same absurd reasons, a person should also need a prescription in order to buy any foods or beverages in a restaurant. A prescription should also be required for purchasing fruits and vegetables, milk, bread, potatoes, cereal, etc. After all, they do affect our health status.

In this context, something that most people don’t realize is that words and semantics often play a major role in what happens in our health care system. Are foods “drugs”? Are vitamins and minerals “drugs”? Should you have to go to a medical doctor in order to have access to the foods and nutritional supplements that you need every day to support your own health and well being? If the FDA and drug company interests succeed in defining food supplements as “drugs”, what is to stop the FDA from extending this warped logic to defining foods and beverages as “drugs?” After all, coffee has caffeine in it; that’s a stimulant drug. Bananas and other fruits have a lot of potassium in them. Potassium is a critical mineral that can have a substantial effect on a person’s metabolism and heart function. Then, perhaps the FDA should regulate how many bananas (a good source of potassium) you can buy each month. Since the FDA is charged with “protecting” your health and well being, perhaps they can save you from yourself by limiting your purchase of bananas. That would help prevent you from “overdosing” on a bunch of bananas. The FDA might even go so far as to make a banana a “controlled substance”.

The healthcare industry is a multi-billion dollar a year industry. It depends on having a steady supply of sick people. Healthy people don’t often go to the doctor to get a prescription for expensive drugs and medications. The use of vitamins, minerals and other food supplements are becoming a larger part of this industry. They can play a major role in prevention of disease processes and in helping a person to maintain his/her health. A lot of money is at stake in the form of sales and big profits. Under current conditions, there are strong financial incentives for drug companies to tightly control the availability and the price of these nutritional supplements just as they do with prescription medications while a patent is in force. In fact, a few years ago, some of the large pharmaceutical companies were found guilty of fixing the price of raw materials for the manufacture of various vitamin and mineral supplements. They paid huge multi-million dollar fines. Many of us recognize that Big Pharma with its huge profits dominates Washington politics in the White House, Congress, and the major federal “health” agencies like the FDA and the CDC. Would it make any sense to give even more power over our dietary supplements to corrupt politicians and corrupt “health” agencies ?

What occurs in the healthcare marketplace may have profound effects on what nutritional supplements are available to us to protect our health. Freedom of choice in healthcare is a critical issue for all of us. It is a common ploy for the drug companies, the FDA, and the American Medical Association to claim that certain actions and policies are for the sole purpose of “protecting” our health and well-being. All too often, when the claim of “protection” is made, there are usually ulterior motives involving more control and monopoly in the healthcare marketplace. Price gouging and escalating costs usually follow. Is it any wonder that healthcare costs continue to escalate?