

# A guide to living well

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A study indicates that long term dietary supplements lead to lower prevalence of chronic diseases.

A DIETARY supplement study has revealed that long-term dietary supplement usage is consistently associated with the lowering risk of heart and brain-related diseases, cancer, as well as diabetes.

From the study, it was found that multiple dietary supplement users had:

- 11% lower cholesterol ratios and 33% lower levels triglycerides
- 36% lower levels of homocysteine
- 59% lower levels of C-reactive protein

Conducted by the University of Berkeley in the United States, the cross-sectional study involved 1,056 participants across three sample groups – long term non-dietary supplement users, single supplement users and multiple supplement users.

The study was designed to observe dietary supplement usage patterns, health and nutritional status among dietary supplement users, with 50% of the multiple supplement users, on average, consuming supplements such as multivitamins, vitamin B-complex, vitamin C, carotenoids, calcium with vitamin D, omega-3 fatty acids, flavonoids, glucosamine, probiotics supplement (for women) and soy protein supplements (for men), for over 20 years.



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— TNS

Long-term multiple dietary supplement users who consumed high bioavailability dietary supplements were also found to have improved health.

Bioavailability is a term used to describe the proportion of a nutrient that is absorbed from the diet and is used for regular body functions.

These users were more likely to have lower concentrations of chronic disease-related biomarkers including serum homocysteine, C-reactive protein, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol and triglycerides, as well as more likely to have optimal blood nutrient concentrations including folate, vitamin C, alpha and beta carotene, and vitamin E.

Based on the findings of the study, the prevalence for general and chronic diseases were found to be lower in multiple dietary supplement users compared to the non-dietary supplement and single-dietary supplement users.

At the "Reality Check: Do Supplements Work?" roundtable session held recently in Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Shaklee Corp chief science officer and Research & Development senior vice-president Dr Bruce Daggy said, "It is important to know the efficacy of the dietary supplements we take, to ensure that we are absorbing the fullest of the focused nutrients.

"The dietary study gives us a clear snapshot of how important dietary supplements are in our daily life, and that it plays an equally important role in providing quality nutrients together with a balanced diet. The key take-away is that we should always supplement wisely."

Also present at the expert roundtable discussion was Malaysian Wellness Society president Datuk Dr Rajbans Singh, who discussed the holistic approach to leading a healthier lifestyle.

"Holistic health is not the absence of sickness. That is why it is important that Malaysians understand the key components

to leading a healthy lifestyle.

"Leading a healthy lifestyle starts with making smart choices from every food group and emphasising on key nutrient benefits that your body requires. While we live by the term 'everything in moderation', we must ensure that a balanced nutrition is not compromised," he stressed.

The 2015 National Health & Morbidity Survey (NHMS) revealed that half the Malaysian population is either obese or overweight, making losing weight a crucial step to improving one's health for Malaysians.

A sedentary lifestyle leads to weight gain and obesity, which would then increase the risk of various chronic diseases.

Sunway Medical Centre Dietetics manager Celeste Lau Wai Hong said, "Unhealthy eating and sedentary lifestyles are the main drivers towards obesity.

"While optimal weight is key to reducing risks of diseases, an active lifestyle should be a priority for all and not just the obese.

"Malaysians need to undertake healthy eating habits and they can start by cutting down sugar or foods that're high in fats."

While the study's findings indicate that dietary supplements play a positive role as an important source of nutrients and lowering disease prevalence, it is fundamental that Malaysians are aware of the three key components to leading a healthy lifestyle – eating healthy, staying active and wise supplementation if necessary.

At the event, Shaklee Malaysia president Helen Lam said, "We have been championing wellness and encouraging Malaysians to take charge of their health.

"We have put in place health and wellness-focused programmes to educate the public. We hope that many more Malaysians will be empowered to start by making small changes in their diet and lifestyle towards a longer and healthy life."

The expert roundtable marked the beginning of Shaklee Malaysia's wellness education campaign, "Live Well, Be Well".