

SUPPLEMENTS HAVE NO HEALTH BENEFITS: Health Claims and Manufacturing Regulations

HFMA RESPONSE TO DAILY MAIL ARTICLE - MAY 2023

This statement is issued in response to the recent coverage of the promotion of Professor Tim Spector's new book, *Food for Life: The New Science of Eating Well* at the recent Hay Festival, ([MailOnline 29/05/23](#)). We wish to comment on the feature on behalf of the UK natural products industry, as it fails to recognise and acknowledge the vital role played by food supplements in contributing positively to the general health and wellbeing of UK consumers

"Micronutrients including vitamins and minerals are essential for life, and a good diet is at the heart of good health," said Graham Keen, Executive Director of the HFMA.

"Aside from eating healthily, food supplements are an essential requirement for some groups of people with characteristics which put them at risk of nutrient deficiencies, a position supported by the Department of Health. For everyone else, findings from the Government's latest National Diet and Nutrition Survey⁽¹⁾ show that a large proportion of UK adults may not be achieving adequate vitamin and mineral levels, because they do not follow fundamental healthy diet guidelines."

"We know that compared to the 1930s, fruit and vegetables have been found to be depleted in minerals by an average of 20%, and that other foods such as dairy have lost minerals like iron in milk by up to 60%. So alongside the fact that 30% of adults and 41% of older adults are not eating the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables, it is important that serious consideration be given to responsible supplementation to maintain good health."

"We should all try to eat as healthily as possible, and supplements are not a replacement. However, supplementation is essential for some groups⁽²⁾ and for thousands of individuals across the UK, these products also help to safeguard nutritional intakes and achieve optimum micronutrient levels."

ENDS

NOTES:

- 1) A recent diet and nutrition survey by the Food Standards Agency found that only 30% of adults and 41% of older adults met the '5-a-day' recommendation.
- 2) The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends certain supplements for some groups of people who are at risk of deficiency, including:
 - Folic acid supplements during pregnancy
 - Vitamin D supplements should be taken by all pregnant and breastfeeding women, children aged six months to five years, people aged 65 and over, and those who are not exposed to much sun
 - All children aged six months to five years should take a supplement containing vitamins A, C and D

Notes for Press:

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The HFMA

The Health Food Manufacturers' Association (HFMA) is the voice of the UK's natural health industry and represents around 140 manufacturers and suppliers of natural health products.

The HFMA is available as a resource to journalists when fact checking information or looking for a reliable and accurate source, including supplying experts for opinion or comment. Please get in touch at comms@hfma.co.uk if we are able to offer assistance.

Founded in 1965, the HFMA is a not-for-profit organisation which operates long-standing codes of practice to ensure that member companies adhere to high standards and offer good quality, safe products supported by responsible, lawful information.

For further information about the HFMA, visit www.hfma.co.uk.