

Vitamin C: Essential to your health

How much vitamin C do you need?

Vitamin C is an antioxidant that helps to maintain good health¹. Humans cannot make or store vitamin C, so they need adequate amounts in their diet every day.

The following chart shows Health Canada's Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA)/Adequate Intake (AI) for vitamin C for all ages².

Life Stage	RDA* / AI** for Vitamin C
Babies 0-6 months	40 mg
Babies 7-12 months	50 mg
Children 1-3 years	15 mg
Children 4-8 years	25 mg
Youth 9-13 years	45 mg
Teen girls 14-18 years	65 mg
Teen boys 14-18 years	75 mg
Adult women	75 mg
Adult men	90 mg

Pregnant and nursing women, or those who smoke, require considerably more.
* Recommended Dietary Allowance ** Adequate Intake



Why vitamin C?

Vitamin C, also called ascorbic acid, is a factor in:

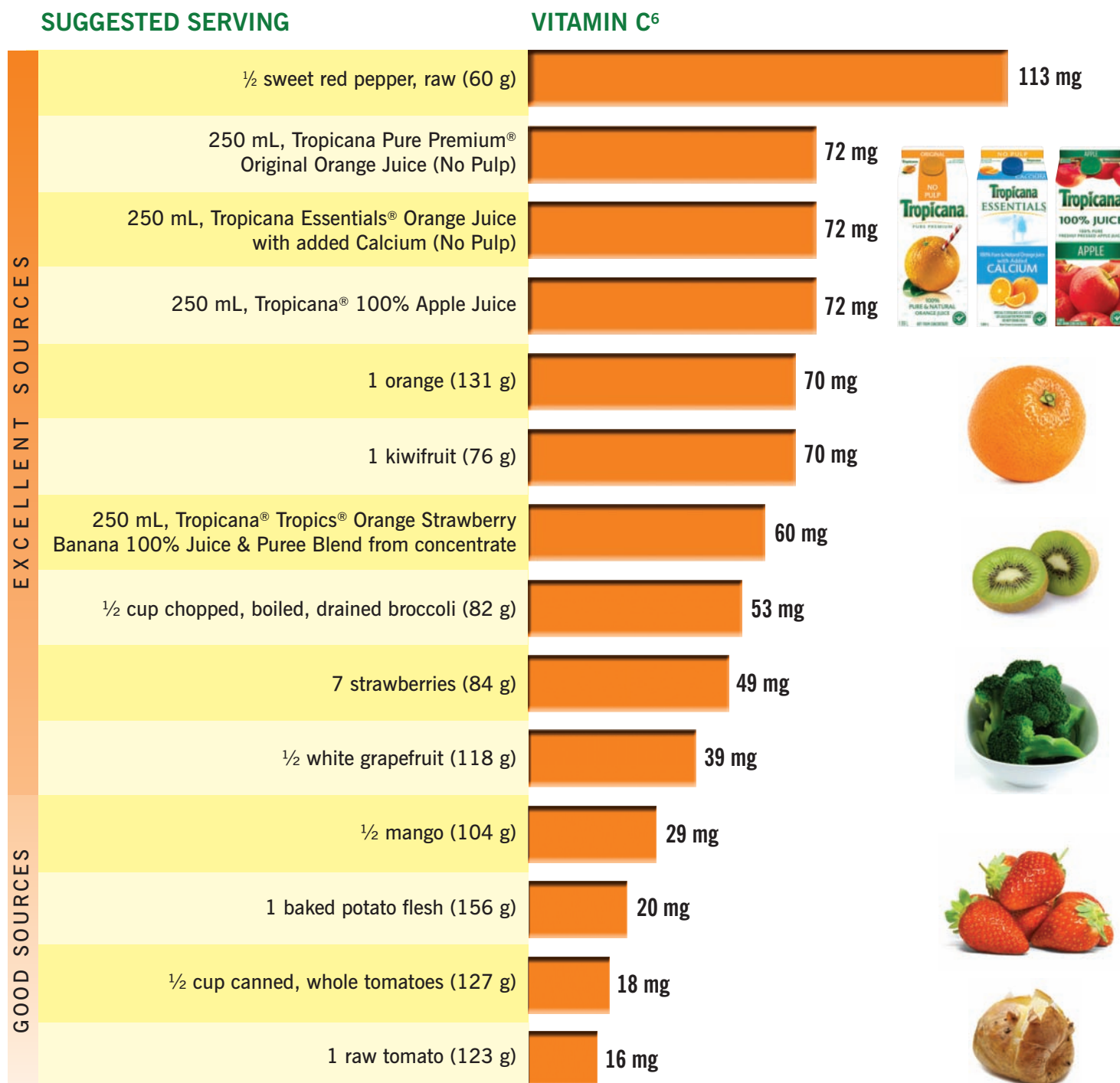
- Healing cuts and wounds
- Synthesizing carnitine, which is needed by the body to burn fat
- Producing collagen: a protein in skin, tendons, ligaments, blood vessels
- Keeping gums, teeth and bones healthy
- Countering damage to your body caused by toxic chemicals, pollutants
- Absorbing iron from food
- Helping reduce a cold's severity, even though it does not prevent colds^{1,3}

Additionally, suboptimal levels of vitamin C in the bloodstream have been shown to be associated with greater risk factors for chronic diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes⁴.

Vitamin C may also be a marker for body weight and blood pressure, as vitamin C-deficient young adults have been shown to have significantly higher waist circumferences, body mass indexes and blood pressure levels than those with normal blood levels of this vitamin⁴.

Examples of vitamin C sources

Vitamin C deficiency is surprisingly prevalent, according to new population studies⁴. Consuming two to three excellent sources (>30 mg/serving)⁵ of vitamin C-rich foods every day, such as citrus fruits or their juices, meets daily intake needs for most people and will provide other essential vitamins and minerals like folate and vitamin A. Vitamin C supplements are not necessary for most people who enjoy a healthy, balanced diet that includes a variety of fruits, vegetables and 100% citrus fruit juices.¹



REFERENCES:

1. Dietitians of Canada Resource on Vitamin C, 2008 <http://dietitians.ca/resources/resourcesearch.asp?fn=view&contentid=1325>
2. Health Canada, Dietary Reference Intakes, 2006: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/reference/table/ref_vitam_tbl-eng.php
3. National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health. Medline Plus. Medical Encyclopedia: Vitamin C. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002404.htm>
4. American Journal of Epidemiology, 2009, 170(4):464-471
5. Nutrition Labelling Regulations, 2008: <http://inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/labeli/guide/ch7be.shtml#tab7-15>
6. All vitamin C values (excluding Tropicana® products) provided in the table were obtained through Health Canada's Nutrient Value of Some Common Foods 2008 version



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