

December 9th, 2009

A daily multivitamin and mineral supplement may help improve brain function in healthy children.

DAILY SUPPLEMENT USE AND BRAIN FUNCTION IN HEALTHY CHILDREN

Vitamins and minerals are essential for optimal neural performance. However, national dietary surveys continue to show that a high percentage of adults and children suffer from deficiencies in one or more vitamins and minerals.

A study published in the November 2008 British Journal of Nutrition examined the effects of multivitamin and multimineral supplements on brain function in children. The study involved 81 healthy children between the ages of 8 and 14. The children were randomly assigned to receive a daily children's multivitamin and multimineral supplement or a placebo.

During twelve weeks of supplementation, the children were given a series of tests to assess brain function. The children who received daily supplements performed better on two tests of attention than did the children who received placebos. Even more surprising was that the improvements in attention scores were seen within a few hours after administering the first vitamin and mineral dose. Mood, another outcome the authors were researching, was not significantly affected by the supplement.

These results suggest that multivitamin and multimineral supplementation may help to improve brain function in healthy children. However, it is impossible to determine whether the improvement in brain function in the children who took the daily supplement was due to a single ingredient in the supplement or whether it was due to the interaction of multiple vitamins and/or minerals. While additional research will be necessary to further elucidate this point, it may be time to reconsider the role of daily multivitamins in maintaining childhood health.

< Br J Nutr 2008 Nov;100(5):1086-96. >