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**SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH DOCUMENTS HEALTH BENEFITS OF  
MULTIVITAMINS, OTHER NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS**

**- New CRN Report Shows Simple Addition of  
Multivitamin to Diet Can Keep Health Risks At Bay -**

WASHINGTON, D.C., *June 24, 2002* — Consistent use of multivitamins and other key supplements can promote good health and help prevent disease, according to a comprehensive new report released today by the Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN). The report found that ongoing use of multivitamins (preferably with minerals) and other single-nutrient supplements (like calcium or folic acid) demonstrated quantifiable positive impact in areas ranging from strengthening the immune system of highly-vulnerable elderly patients, to drastically reducing the risk of neural tube birth defects such as spina bifida.

The 100-plus page report—titled *The Benefits of Nutritional Supplements*—reviewed more than a decade’s-worth of the most scientifically-significant studies measuring the health benefits of multivitamins and other nutritional supplements, including antioxidants (vitamins C and E), calcium, long chain omega-3 fatty acids (fish oils), vitamin D, vitamins B-6 and B-12, and folic acid.

“The medical and scientific communities are rapidly accumulating powerful evidence about the role of nutritional supplements in both health promotion and disease prevention,” said Annette Dickinson, Ph.D., the author of the report and CRN vice president, scientific and regulatory affairs.

“This growing critical mass of data underscores the need for health professionals to do more to encourage patients to get into a regular, defined routine of supplementation. While it is never too late to start incorporating supplements into a healthy lifestyle, there is compelling evidence that consistent, long-term use provides the strongest benefits. For as little as a dime a day, the cost of a basic multivitamin, you can make a sound investment in good health,” she said.

Highlights from the report findings include:

- If all women of childbearing age used multivitamins with folic acid, it should be possible to reduce the current incidence of neural tube birth defects like spina bifida by as much as 70%.
- The routine use of multivitamins and mineral supplements by the elderly could improve immune function and thus reduce infectious disease, potentially cutting in half the total number of days they are sick.
- Supplementation with calcium and vitamin D could reduce the rate of hip fracture among older people by at least 20%—meaning 40,000 to 50,000 fewer hip fractures each year in the United States—for an average annual savings of \$1.5 to \$2 billion.
- The potential cost savings of a prevention-oriented approach to health and diet are tremendous. A 1997 analysis predicted that if the occurrence of cardiovascular disease, stroke and hip fracture were delayed five years, total U.S. health care cost savings could equal \$89 billion annually.
- While the addition of a multivitamin would benefit most people, different additional supplements should be chosen based on the specific lifestage, gender or lifestyle of the individual. For example, though calcium is generally important for all men and women, it is particularly critical for children building bone mass and elderly people seeking to preserve it.

“Scientific evidence in support of the health benefits of nutritional supplements has grown dramatically in recent years,” said Jeffrey Blumberg, Ph.D., a professor in the School of Nutrition

Science and Policy at Tufts University in Boston. “We must now work to translate this knowledge to health care providers, policy makers and consumers so the simple actions people can take to promote their health and prevent disease can be more fully realized. The impact of a rational use of dietary supplements can also help reduce health care costs which escalate every year as our population grows older.”

Dr. Dickinson noted that while all people should strive to eat a healthy and balanced diet—no matter what their age or health circumstance—few in reality do. “While the overall improvement of dietary habits has been the focus of much research on health promotion and disease prevention, the medical and scientific communities are increasingly recognizing that nutritional supplements have a critical role to play. Too many studies have shown that most diets—even fairly healthy ones—fall well below the Recommended Dietary Allowance for many nutrients. Supplements are a proven bridge between what we should eat and what we actually eat,” she said.

Dr. Dickinson is an expert on the benefits of vitamins and minerals who has worked in the field since 1973. In 1995, President Clinton appointed Dr. Dickinson to the Commission on Dietary Supplement Labels, and in 2002 she was named to the Food Advisory Committee of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). She is the author of numerous papers and is frequently asked to speak on the topic of dietary supplements to policy-making, scientific and other audiences.

The full report and additional press materials, including graphics and information on how to purchase a copy of *The Benefits of Nutritional Supplements*, are available on the CRN website at

[www.crnusa.org/benefits.html](http://www.crnusa.org/benefits.html)

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The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN), founded in 1973, is a Washington, D.C.-based trade association representing ingredient suppliers and manufacturers in the dietary supplement industry. CRN members adhere to a strong code of ethics, comply with dosage limits and manufacture dietary supplements to high quality standards under good manufacturing practices. The dietary supplement industry is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration and the Federal Trade Commission, as well as by government agencies in each of the 50 states.