



Q&A

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Questions and Answers About Vitamin E and HOPE-TOO

Like many people, you may have questions about some of the recent news stories about studies examining vitamin E. Here is some useful information to help you better understand the facts and make your own choices about vitamin E.

Q. Recent media headlines reporting a vitamin E research study (the HOPE-TOO study) seem to question the safety and benefits of vitamin E. Is this vitamin safe? Are there benefits from taking vitamin E supplements?

A. Yes. Vitamin E is not only safe, but like all vitamins it is essential for life. Vitamin E has many potential long-term benefits for healthy people, including protecting against oxidative damage in body cells due to the action of free radicals, and reducing harmful inflammation. Its benefits may go well beyond those that are currently recognized, and much additional research is underway to confirm them.

There is study evidence that vitamin E helps protect against:

- Infectious diseases, especially upper respiratory infections
- Some cancers, including prostate and lung
- Eye diseases, such as macular degeneration and cataracts
- Neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's
- Cardiovascular disease in some populations

Q. Should people change their supplement routine based on HOPE-TOO?

A. The HOPE-TOO study must be interpreted carefully and cautiously. A close look at the study itself and the accompanying editorial reveals no evidence that vitamin E is unsafe for healthy people. The study was narrowly focused on older people (average age 70+) who already had serious heart, stroke or diabetes health problems. These subjects were already taking a variety of medications for their conditions.

Q. Are the findings from HOPE-TOO conclusive?

A. The study results are not the final word on vitamin E. The study's authors concede their conclusion are not confirmed by other existing studies and call for additional research to evaluate them. They acknowledge the result they observed could be due to chance.

In addition, there are many ongoing studies of the benefits of vitamin E supplements for a number of diseases and conditions. The expert researchers conducting these ongoing studies see no reason to abandon or alter their trials. This is a substantial vote of confidence in the safety and likely benefit of vitamin E.