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## **FACT SHEET – Multivitamin Inclusion in SNAP**

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### **Low-income Americans do not obtain all the nutrients they need from food alone.**

- Data from the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans show that many Americans do not meet their requirements for several important nutrients.
- Nutrition surveys consistently show that substantial numbers of Americans fail to obtain the recommended amounts of a variety of essential nutrients from diet alone.
- Calcium, magnesium, and vitamins A, D, E, and C are some of the nutrients that are consumed below the recommended levels. Iron is also under-consumed by many women.
- Calcium and vitamin D are considered “nutrients of public health concern” because low intakes are associated with particular health concerns.
- Studies show that low-income and older Americans are more likely to have insufficient and nutritionally inadequate diets.

### **Science underscores the role of a multivitamin for filling critical nutrient gaps.**

- Dietary supplements, like the multivitamin, provide shortfall nutrients and have been shown to help Americans fill nutrient gaps.
- A multivitamin, in combination with a balanced diet, is a healthy choice and can play an important role in promoting good nutrition and well-being.
- The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends that all women planning or capable of pregnancy take a daily supplement containing 400 to 800 micrograms of folic acid.
- Several leading medical authorities recommend that all pregnant women take a daily supplement that contains 150 micrograms of iodine daily.
- Data from the 2001-2008 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) reveal nutrient shortfalls in children at 88% for vitamin D, 54% for calcium, and 41% for magnesium.
- A daily multivitamin can provide all of the nutrients recommended to pregnant women and older Americans.
- Individuals over 50 are recommended to get a supplemental source of vitamin B12.
- The use of a multivitamin and other vitamin and mineral supplements has been shown to support immune function, reduce the risk of some cancers, and may lower risk of some chronic diseases among older Americans.

### **Including a multivitamin in SNAP creates no additional costs, but provides low-income consumers with nutritional choice.**

- The average price of a multivitamin is less than a dime a day. For a mother and two children each using a multivitamin of their choice, the total cost for all three is about 17¢ a day or \$5.20 per month.
- Currently, multivitamins are not included in the SNAP program. By including multivitamin coverage, program costs do not increase—it simply gives recipients the ability to make healthier nutrition decisions.
- Inclusion of a multivitamin in the SNAP program empowers low-income consumers with a choice for better nutrition.
- SNAP policy should facilitate and not impede the efforts of the nation’s poor to obtain proper nutrition and health benefits.