

Media Release

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Supplements Have an Important Role in Supporting Nutrition

Mr Carl Gibson, chief executive of Complementary Medicines Australia has today responded to the claim that vitamins are a “waste of money”, stating that whilst it’s important to emphasise that vitamins and minerals are not a substitute for a good diet supplements do have an important role to play alongside a healthy diet and exercise.

“Just last month, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) released new figures to show that Australia’s eating habits are less than ideal, with most Australians not meeting the minimum recommended serves for the five major food groups. The typical Australian is eating plenty of food but is still starving of quality nutrients from vegetables, fruit, dairy products, lean meats and grain-based foods, instead filling up on energy-dense, nutrient-poor ‘discretionary foods’ such as cakes, confectionary and pastry products.”

Complementary medicines, including vitamins, minerals and multivitamins, are generally regulated in Australia as Listed, low risk medicines, used for minor self limiting conditions, maintaining health and wellbeing, or the promotion or enhancement of health. Multivitamins, which can contain anywhere from 12-25 plus ingredients per dose, are designed to protect against broad nutritional deficiencies.

“Multivitamins can play a role in improving general health and decreasing the risk of chronic disease. For example, the Physicians’ Health Study II, which is the largest randomised clinical trial of a multivitamin supplement conducted to date, showed a statistically significant 8 per cent reduction in total cancer incidence in male physicians.”¹

“It is perhaps not surprising, then, that in Australia there has been a growing use and acceptance of complementary medicines by individuals keen to care for their general health and wellbeing.”

“Many people take multivitamins because they know they don’t always eat as well as they should, with the typical Australian diet shown to fall well short of the recommended daily nutrient requirements.”

ENDS

¹ Gaziano JM, Sesso HD, Christen WG, Bubes V, Smith JP, MacFadyen J, et al. Multivitamins in the prevention of cancer in men: the Physicians' Health Study II randomized controlled trial. JAMA. 2012;308:1871-80

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