

Vitamin drinks may not be a healthy choice

By Anahad O'Connor, New York Times

Companies are increasingly adding vitamins and minerals to juices, sports drinks and bottled water, responding to a growing consumer demand for these products. Even though the amounts of added nutrients in these drinks are typically small, some nutrition scientists are concerned that through their overall diets, many people may be ingesting levels of vitamins and other nutrients that are not only unnecessary, but potentially harmful.

“You have vitamins and minerals that occur naturally in foods, and then you have people taking supplements, and then you have all these fortified foods,” said Mridul Datta, an assistant professor in the department of nutrition science at Purdue University. “It adds up to quite an excess. There’s the potential for people to get a lot more of these vitamins than they need.”

Today more than ever, studies show, the average person is exposed to unusually high levels of vitamins and minerals. Already, more than half of all adults in the United States take a multivitamin or dietary supplement. Bread, milk and other foods are often fortified with folic acid, niacin and vitamins A and D.

A study published in July found that many people are exceeding the safe limits of nutrient intakes established by the Institute of Medicine. And research shows that people who take dietary supplements are often the ones who need them the least.

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