



Health Supplements Information Service

THE HEALTH SUPPLEMENTS INFORMATION SERVICE COMMENTS ON SELENIUM SUPPLEMENTATION IN DIABETES

9th July 2007: In response to US analysis data from the Nutritional Prevention of Cancer Trial regarding diabetes and selenium supplementation, the Health Supplements Information Service would like to note the following:

Pamela Mason, HSIS spokesperson comments, " Selenium is a trace mineral essential for many body processes. As a result, this essential nutrient is an integral part of several enzymes in the body that help to prevent cells from damage by oxidation."

"Looking at this latest analyses from the Nutritional Prevention of Cancer Trial, it is vital to note that the trial was conducted in the US where dietary selenium intake is significantly higher than in the UK. Indeed, in the UK, dietary intakes of selenium are a cause for concern as they have decreased considerably during recent decades, falling by 50% over the past 30 years. Average intake of selenium is 35 micrograms¹ daily in British adults, while the Reference Nutrient Intake is 60 micrograms for women and 75 micrograms for men. This reduction in intake has occurred because most British bread is now made from European wheat which is low in selenium compared with North American wheat which was used years ago. While the health impact of this reduction is not fully known, The Department of Health is sufficiently concerned to be monitoring it."

"In relation to diabetes, which is a multifactorial disease, influenced by body weight and lack of physical activity, it would be surprising if a supplement of a single nutrient, such as selenium, would prevent it. These studies looking at single nutrients for disease prevention and treatment, of which there have been several in recent months, are extremely optimistic in the context of diseases where so many factors play a part."

In conclusion, Pamela Mason notes: "Selenium is essential for human health and given that dietary intake is low in the UK; a supplement containing this essential nutrient should be consumed in accordance with recommended dietary allowances."

**For further information or to arrange an interview with an HSIS spokesperson,
please contact:**

Nicky Smith, HSIS

020 7808 9750

¹ Gregory et al. Diet and Nutritional Survey of British adults. London HMSO, 1990

Stephanie Lee, HSIS

020 7808 9764