

DECADES OF DECLINE

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPACTS
OF FALLING NUTRIENT INTAKES



NEW RESEARCH FROM THE HEALTH AND FOOD SUPPLEMENTS INFORMATION SERVICE
REVEALS DECADES OF DIETARY DECLINES AND WHY IT'S BAD NEWS FOR ALL BRITS WHATEVER AGE



FOREWORD

We are constantly bombarded with advice on nutrition. It has never been easier to access information on the importance of a healthy diet or use apps, food trackers and other tools to help us ensure the optimal intakes of vitamins, minerals and micronutrients that underpin good health.

But something is clearly going wrong, because the latest research into nutrient status in the UK reveals three decades of decline. A newly published research review¹ from the Health and Food Supplements Information Service (HSIS) - www.hsis.org - which analysed the dietary trends in the UK from 1997, as well as the latest real-world research on our eating patterns and nutrient intakes, shows that our diets have actually become less healthy over this time frame.

Dr Pamela Mason, lead author on the new HSIS research review, and an expert adviser to HSIS, says, "Studies which focus on nutrient status as specific set points will not pick up these trends, that's why it is so important to look at datasets across several decades."

Our intakes of many important nutrients which help fuel our health and wellness daily are falling, with a number now so low they are defined as deficiencies — a trend which has serious implications, not only in terms of our personal health, but also in terms of the pressure on an already struggling National Health Service (NHS).

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Dr Nisa Aslam, a GP from HSIS notes, “There is often an assumption that improving health literacy and awareness will automatically translate into better health and wellbeing regimes, but when it comes to diet and nutrition, we can see that this is not the case.

“The National Diet and Nutrition Survey, a detailed analysis of food intakes and the nutrient status of a weighted cross-section of the UK population, shows that intakes of a number of important micronutrients are falling, in some cases at an alarming rate.

“And despite the huge sums of money the Government, NHS and other organisations have spent on awareness campaigns, almost two in five adults don’t know about the Eatwell Guide on the proportions of each food group recommended for a healthy diet.”²

Dietitian, Dr Carrie Ruxton from HSIS, says, “This is a real concern, because the Eatwell Plate – which presents this information as a graphic with pie-chart plate portions of the different food groups – is so common I can’t imagine there is any adult who has not seen it somewhere. It has been reproduced so many times, in patient information leaflets, in displays at GP surgeries or health centres, online and in magazines and newspapers.

“Yet the data suggest that too many Brits are blind to the importance of a nutritious diet, and are confused about how to eat healthily. This is likely to be impacting their risk of serious health issues such as heart disease, diabetes and stroke.”³

“ THERE IS A STRONG CASE FOR A RETHINK ON PUBLIC HEALTH MESSAGING WHICH FOCUSES ON FIVE-A-DAY ”

What is also telling is that there are significant shortfalls for nutrients such as vitamin A which the NHS advises you should be able to get “all you need by eating a varied and balanced diet”,⁴ as well as for vitamin D, where the official advice is to take a supplement for much of the year as it is impossible to get adequate intakes from food alone.⁵

Public health nutritionist and part of the HSIS expert panel, Dr Emma Derbyshire says, “There is clearly a disconnect, and it’s crucial that we address this mis-match between official advice and the real-world evidence. Given the evidence, there is a strong case for a rethink on public health messaging which focuses on five-a-day and reassures consumers that they can obtain most of their nutrient needs from diet alone.”

HSIS GP, Dr Gill Jenkins agrees. “Yes, in an ideal world, with the exception of vitamin D, diet alone should provide most people with all of the nutrients they need. But we already know that there are multiple caveats and advice to take a range of supplements for

specific groups such as infants, women of child-bearing age, pregnant women and new mums, and older adults.

“However, we don’t live in an ideal world. The vast majority of children and adults do not eat the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day which would give them a good chance of adequate nutrient intakes.⁶

“Two in five adults say they are trying to lose weight, with most trying to achieve this by eating less.⁷ But what they may not realise, is that an unintended consequence of many weight loss regimes is a drop in nutrient intakes.”⁸

This HSIS report explores the latest dietary data and trends, highlights the challenges which are preventing both children and adults from achieving adequate nutrient intakes and looks at the implications of these shortfalls for long-term health outcomes and the NHS.

Crucially, it also provides insights on how to address this personal challenge and major public health issue.





1 THE LONG AND THE SHORT-FALLS

A new research review, *British Dietary Habits and Declining Nutrient Intakes*, written by researcher, and nutritionist Dr Pamela Mason, and GPs Dr Nisa Aslam and Dr Gill Jenkins, paints a worrying picture of the nation's nutritional status.⁹

The authors analysed data for all age groups from the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) rolling programme which began in 2008/2009 and real-world data from a 2024 survey of 1,019 adults which was commissioned by the Health and Food Supplements Service.¹⁰

To enlarge the scope of their study, they also incorporated data from two early NDNS datasets, which used a different methodology to the current rolling programme; a 2000/2001 survey on adult nutrition and a 1997 survey on the nutrient status of adolescents aged 11 to 18.

Dr Pamela Mason says, "This combined dataset provides important insights into our evolving attitudes to food and nutrient intakes, and it reveals some extremely worrying trends." In short, as the HSIS paper warns, the authors found, "sizeable shortfalls" of a range of essential micronutrients "across the population."

Dr Pamela Mason explains further, "Nutrient status is measured by the Lower Reference Nutrient Intake, or LRNI, which is the minimum intake of a nutrient that is needed to prevent deficiency – and far too many people are not meeting this health-critical bar."

Dr Gill Jenkins, adds, "When someone is routinely below the LRNI, as huge numbers of Britons now are, they will almost certainly be deficient,¹¹ so the shortfalls we have identified in this research review paper are very worrying.

2

LATEST REAL-WORLD
RESEARCH FINDINGS
REVIEWED

“These shortfalls and deficiencies have important implications not only for specific high-risk demographic groups, but they are markers of a poor diet more generally – and we know that this is a driver for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity and other major public health challenges.”

Diet – A Cornerstone For Health And Wellness

A study which tracked the diet and health of more than 75,000 adults, which was published last year highlighted the importance of a healthy, nutritious diet, with the authors stating, “Diet remains a cornerstone for maintaining optimal health.”¹²

Dr Carrie Ruxton says, “This has been confirmed, again and again. Around 400BC Hippocrates, the founder of modern medicine, advised, ‘Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food’, which over the centuries has morphed into the saying, ‘Food is the best medicine’.

“But as the new HSIS paper by Dr Pamela Mason, Dr Nisa Aslam and Dr Gill Jenkins confirms, as have many previous academic reviews and studies, far too many people are not heeding this advice.”

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Real-world research¹³ which was commissioned by the Health and Food Supplements Information Service (HSIS) confirms that almost three-quarters (74%) of adults believe that good nutrition is crucial for health and wellbeing. But the new HSIS paper reveals some worrying gaps and trends over time including the following:

Vitamins & Minerals: Declining Consumption Trends

VITAMIN A

Vitamin A intakes have declined steadily since 2008 with falls of:

- **21%** in children
- **23%** in teens
- **13%** in working-age adults, and
- **29%** in over-65

As a result, the most recent NDNS shows that 10% of adults aged 19 to 64, and almost one in five (18%) 11 to 18-year-olds now have levels below the LRNI. Yet, despite these gaps, the NHS advises, “You should be able to get all the vitamin A you need from your diet.”

Also known as retinol, vitamin A is a fat-soluble vitamin which is essential for vision, healthy skin and mucous membranes. The recommended intake for adults is 700mcg for men and 600mcg for women.¹⁴

VITAMIN D

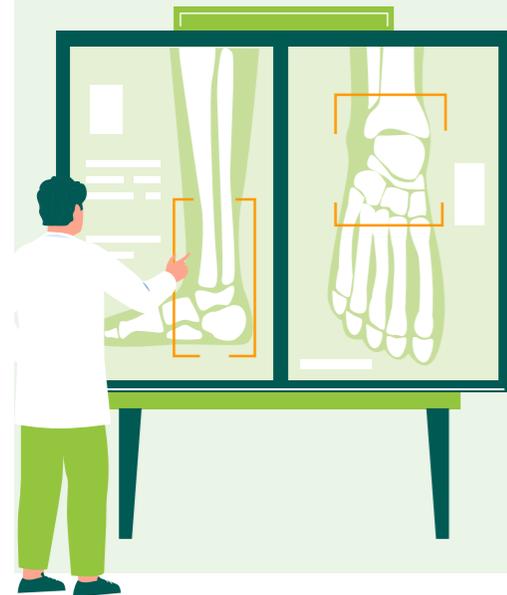
Vitamin D status has also slipped since 2008. Overall, one in five people in the UK is deficient in this key nutrient, with much more serious shortfalls in some demographics.

Despite advice from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) to take supplementary vitamin D,¹⁵ almost two in five (39%) girls and 15% of boys aged 11 to 18 are deficient. In working-age adults, 19% of women and 16% of men are deficient and 13% of over-65s also fall short of the threshold for good health.

CALCIUM

Calcium is important for strong bones and teeth, as well as vascular and muscle function, signaling between cells and hormonal secretion. But levels have fallen by 20% over the past 20 years and, as a result a growing number of people would benefit from supplements to protect their bone health.

Overall, almost one in seven working-age adults (19–64) and 15% of 11 to 18-year-olds now have calcium intakes below the LRNI. Among girls and young women (11 to 18), this rises to one in five (20%) and in women aged 19 to 64 the numbers of women failing to achieve this dietary target has climbed steadily from 6% to 11%.



FOLIC ACID

Folic acid levels in women of child-bearing age are now so low that nine in ten are at increased risk of having a child with neural tube defects if they became pregnant. Since the NDNS rolling programme began, the number of women with dangerously low folate has climbed from around two-thirds to almost 90%.

Women planning a pregnancy are advised to take a daily supplement of 400mcg folic acid until the twelfth week of pregnancy.¹⁶ But two-thirds are not following this advice and the number taking a supplement before pregnancy has actually fallen, from 35% in 1999–2001, to 31% in 2011–2012.

IODINE

Iodine is an essential component of the thyroid hormones which regulate metabolic activity and plays a part in immune function, but intakes for all age groups have fallen by 5% over the past 20 years.

The most recent NDNS shows that almost a quarter (24%) of 11 to 18-year-olds are now failing to achieve the LRNI, almost twice the number not hitting this target in the 2008/2009 survey (13%).

Looking specifically at girls and women, among 11 to 18-year-olds, the proportion not achieving the LRNI has climbed from 19% to 28% over this period, and in women aged 19 to 64 it has risen from 9% to 12%.

Dr Nisa Aslam notes, “This is very worrying because iodine is not only important for healthy thyroid function, it is also crucial for the development of healthy bones and the central nervous system for the developing foetus and during infancy.”



“EVEN A MODEST IRON DEFICIENCY CAN CAUSE TIREDNESS AND INCREASED SUSCEPTIBILITY TO INFECTIONS”

IRON

Iron intakes have fallen by more than 10% over the past 27 years and, as a result, almost half (49%) of girls and young women aged 11 to 18 and a quarter of women aged 19 to 64 are now falling short of the LRNI.

Dr Gill Jenkins says, “This will be impacting women’s energy levels and overall health as even a modest iron deficiency can cause tiredness and increased susceptibility to infections.”

MAGNESIUM

Magnesium plays a part in more than 300 enzyme systems across the body, and helps to regulate a vast range of tasks including muscle and nerve function, blood glucose control and blood pressure.

It also contributes to bone development and the transport of calcium and potassium across cell membranes, which makes it important for muscle contraction and normal heart rhythm.

Yet despite its importance, the latest NDNS data shows that 40% of 11 to 18-year-olds, 12% of 19 to 64-year-olds and 13% of over-65s had magnesium intakes below the LRNI. For women specifically across these age ranges the figures were 47%, 11% and 11% respectively.

The proportions of 11-18-year-old boys with magnesium intakes below the LRNI increased from 23% to 26% between 1997 and 2008/2009.



OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

Omega-3 fatty acids are important for eye, brain and heart health and although intakes are not routinely gathered in the NDNS, data is collected on our intakes for oily fish, our primary source. This shows that all age groups are eating less than the 140g of oily fish recommended per week to ensure a combined total of 500mg of Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA).

On the plus side, while it is still not enough, in younger age groups (4 to 39 years) intakes of oily fish have risen — although this has been offset by falling consumption in over-40s.

Omega-3 fatty acids are important for eye, brain and heart health and the new HSIS paper highlights an earlier analysis of the NDNS by Dr Emma Derbyshire, which found that younger generations, women of childbearing age and pregnant mothers are at particular risk of oily fish and omega-3 shortfalls.

POTASSIUM

Potassium is needed to control the balance of fluids throughout the body, and it also helps the heart muscle work properly, but over the past 20 years overall intakes have fallen.

The most serious decline has been in 11 to 18-year-olds, with almost a third (30%) now failing to achieve the LRNI, compared to nearly a quarter (23%) in the 2008/2009 NDNS. For females the picture is even worse, with 37% not achieving the LRNI, up from 32%.

For working-age adults the number falling short has nudged up from 16% to 17% and in over-65s it has risen from 13% to 15%. Once again, women are the most likely to be deficient with the number failing to meet the LRNI rising from 32% to 37% for those of working age and from 13% to 20% in women over the age of 65.



SELENIUM

Selenium supports the immune system and helps prevent damage to cells and tissues,¹⁷ but the new paper highlights significant shortfalls, particularly among older adults.

Almost a third (32%) of 11 to 18-year-olds, 36% of working age adults and almost half (47%) of over-65s have selenium intakes below the LRNI. For women, the gaps are even wider, with 41%, 46% and 59% respectively failing to achieve this target.

ZINC

Zinc is one of the few micronutrients where there has been some improvement, with average intakes above, or close, to the reference nutrient intake, or RNI. This is the amount of a nutrient that is needed to ensure that everyone, even people with high needs, gets enough to prevent deficiency.¹⁸

But in some age groups, intakes have fallen, with almost one in five (18%) of 11 to 18-year-olds now failing to achieve the LRNI, up two percentage points from 2008/2009. This reverses an earlier trend which saw an improvement in intakes between 1997 and 2008.



3 DRIVERS FOR DEFICIENCIES

Consumer research¹⁹ on the nation's attitudes to diet and nutrition, which was commissioned by the Health and Food Supplements Information Service (HSIS), provides important insights on eating patterns and potential drivers for the deficiencies revealed in the new paper:

- **78%** of those surveyed respondents were meat eaters
- **9%** were vegetarian
- **6%** were pescatarian
- **3%** were vegan, with this more common in women than men (3% vs 2%)
- The remainder described themselves as lacto-ovo vegetarians or as not following a specific eating pattern.

Dr Carrie Ruxton notes, "Any diet which excludes whole food groups increases the risk of deficiency. For instance, meat, offal and oily fish are our best sources of readily absorbed haem iron, so the fact that nearly a quarter of those surveyed do not eat red meat is undoubtedly a factor in the poor iron status of so many women.

"If you choose not to eat meat, it's important to remember that at most you will absorb only ten per cent of the iron found in non-meat sources such as spinach, peas, lentils and beans. Eating foods containing vitamin C, such as fruit and vegetables, will boost absorption, but this requires a degree of knowledge and preparation which the survey suggests may be lacking."

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Dietary Ratings And Challenges

When respondents to the HSIS research review were asked to rate their diet on a scale of one to ten, with 1 being very unhealthy and 10 being very healthy, the average score was just six. Older adults were the most likely to say they ate healthily, with an average score of 6.8 among the over 60s surveyed compared to 5.6 of those aged 18 to 29. Similarly, when asked how nutrient rich they thought their diet was, over 60s said 6.4 while the youngest group had an average score of only 5.3. Overall, the average score was 5.7 out of ten.

The survey responses also reveal some obvious challenges:

- **91%** admit their food choices could be healthier
- **85%** don't know the recommended intakes of nutrients
- **39%** have been told, at some time, that they have a nutrient deficiency
- **23%** admit they often don't eat fruit or vegetables for a couple of days
- **49%** say they would like to eat more nutritious food
- **47%** feel they are eating less nutritious food than they were a couple of years ago

Education Gaps

There is a clear need for better education, with almost all of the adults polled believing that food and nutrition should be taught in schools and four out of five (83%) saying there is confusion around what a healthy diet actually looks like.

Dr Emma Derbyshire adds, "When you start to drill down into the data, some worrying gaps in nutrient knowledge emerge. Given how much focus there has been on immunity in the past few years, I was surprised that only half of the respondents knew that vitamin C supported immunity, and only 38% realised vitamin D was important.

"There is also growing evidence that omega-3s support immune function, in part by helping to damp down inflammation according to research."²⁰ Yet only 21% of those surveyed were aware of a link between these fatty acids and immune function.

Dr Nisa Aslam continues, "Given its importance for oxygen transportation, I was shocked by the lack of knowledge around the importance of iron to support energy." Overall, only 29% realised that iron plays a part in supporting energy, with knowledge among women significantly ahead of men, 34% compared to 22%.

Even fewer (26%) were aware that vitamin B12 is important for energy metabolism. Dr Gill Jenkins adds, "Shortfalls of vitamins B6, B9 and B12 can all lead to energy-sapping anaemia, and ensuring good levels of B12 is challenging for anyone who avoids meat and dairy products. It's essential that vegans take supplements or eat foods fortified with vitamin B12."^{21,22}

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4

NUTRIENT DEFICIENCIES:
IMPACTS AND
IMPLICATIONS

“Our ability to digest and absorb vitamin B12 decreases with age, and a number of widely prescribed medicines, such as proton pump inhibitors, are also known to impair absorption.”^{23,24}

Dr Nisa Aslam adds, “If your levels of B12 fall too low, you may need injections to redress the deficiency, so it’s much wiser to prevent problems by taking a vitamin and mineral supplement. This will ensure adequate intakes of all the nutrients your body needs.”

Knowledge around skeletal health is also patchy, with almost two-thirds (64%) realising calcium supports bones, but only 30% knowing vitamin D is important and just 16% aware of the role of magnesium.

Dr Carrie Ruxton notes further: “This highlights one of the biggest issues with patchy diets. So many of the nutrients we need work in synergy. Yes, of course, calcium is essential for strong bones, but bone formation also requires vitamin D, magnesium, phosphorus and potassium.

“And there are other vitamins and minerals which are needed for metabolic processes related to bone, including manganese, copper, boron, iron, zinc, vitamin A, vitamin K, vitamin C, and the B vitamins.”²⁵

Dr Nisa Aslam says, “This is why a daily multivitamin and multimineral supplement provides such an important safety net. It will help plug any nutrient gaps and ensure your body systems have all of the components needed for optimal function.”

But the HSIS real-world research poll reveals some curious disconnects between attitudes to diet and health and our actions. Despite the obvious nutrient gaps and widespread acknowledgement that their diets could be improved, three-quarters (75%) of those surveyed said that good nutrition is ‘crucial’ for health and wellbeing and a further 22% thought it played a part.



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Diet plays such an important role in preventing chronic illness and it has given rise to a new field of medicine — known as nutritional epidemiology — which explores how to incorporate the latest evidence-based nutrition with a patient’s personal preferences.

This has been coupled with growing understanding of the importance of gut bacteria and the use of probiotics to improve levels of beneficial, or so-called friendly, bacteria. Although the new HSIS research shows that only 62% know what probiotics are, with 7% wrongly believing they are a form of antibiotic and 6% thinking they are a type of fibre. More than half (58%) have no idea what foods provide probiotics.

Yet, as research published last year in *Frontiers in Nutrition* pointed out, “There has been growing interest in understanding the therapeutic role of probiotics, micronutrients and bioactive compounds derived from edible plants in various health conditions.”²⁶

The Perils Of Poor Nutrition Habits

The World Health Organisation has identified unhealthy diets as one of the most serious global risks to health, and points out that a nutritious balanced diet reduces the risk of our biggest killers — heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer.²⁷

Dr Emma Derbyshire says, “Ideally, we should get all our nutrient needs from foods, but this is almost impossible if you avoid any food groups, are cutting calories to try to lose weight, skip meals or don’t eat five portions of fruit or vegetables every day.

“If you tick any of these boxes, or have a higher need for specific nutrients because of the medicines you take, or your age or circumstances, there is a strong argument for taking a multivitamin and multimineral supplement to help prevent any potential deficiencies or shortfalls.”



Diseases of the heart and circulatory system kill 480 people every day in the UK. They account for 270 hospital admissions and impact the lives of 7.6 million people. The British Heart Foundation estimates the immediate healthcare costs are around £10 billion each year.²⁸

However, Government estimates suggest the health and social care costs in England alone are £7.4 billion, with a wider cost to the economy totaling £15.8 billion.²⁹ Dr Carrie Ruxton notes further, “Whichever way you look at it, the healthcare costs are enormous and if we could reduce this burden, even slightly, the benefits to the NHS would be enormous.”

Looking at stroke alone, the number of strokes per year is estimated to rise by 60% from 2015 to 2035 — but because stroke often leads to severe disability, over this time, the social care costs are expected to soar by as much as 250%.³⁰

Dr Gill Jenkins adds, “Unhealthy diets are key drivers for all forms of cardiovascular disease, and they are also a factor in diabetes, cancer and dementia. As a report by the King’s Fund pointed out, better prevention and management gives multiple

‘bangs for your buck’ in terms of the overall health of the UK population.³¹

“A simple step in the right direction is to take a daily multivitamin and multimineral supplement to help protect against any nutrient deficiencies. If you don’t eat the recommended two portions of fish a week, including one oily fish (a portion is around 140g) — and most Britons don’t — it would also make sense to take an omega-3 or fish oil supplement too.”



“DISEASES OF THE HEART AND CIRCULATORY SYSTEM KILL 480 PEOPLE EVERY DAY IN THE UK”

Diabetes And Diet – The Link

Diabetes is another huge public health challenge, with 9% of men and 6% of women now diagnosed with the condition and many with undiagnosed disease of prediabetes.³²

Dr Gill Jenkins notes, “Type-2 diabetes, once known as late-onset disease, is becoming increasingly common in people under the age of 40 and poor diet and obesity are primary drivers of the disease.”³³

Chris Askew, chief executive of Diabetes UK warns, “We’re in the grip of a rapidly escalating diabetes crisis, with spiraling numbers of people now living with Type-2 diabetes and millions at high risk of developing the condition. But it doesn’t have to be this way. With the right care and support, cases of Type-2 diabetes can be prevented or put into remission.”

Dr Nisa Aslam continues, “The first clue that diet played a part in the disease came more than 100 years ago, when German medics noticed that deaths from diabetes fell from 1914 to 1919, when food shortages were common and intakes of sugar and carbohydrates were severely restricted.”³⁴

A paper in the International Journal of Health Sciences reported that diabetes, “can be controlled through improvement in patient’s dietary knowledge, attitudes, and practices” and it identified snacking and skipping breakfast as two of the bad habits which heightened the risk of obesity and diabetes.³⁵

Dr Gill Jenkins says, “There is still a lot to learn about the connection between diet and living healthily, but the fact that there is a strong connection is now settled science. Studies point to many intriguing clues, and suggest that some micronutrients may be particularly beneficial for long-term good health.

“However, nutrition is complex and the best way to protect yourself is to eat a balanced diet, maintain a healthy weight and keep active. That said, it is clear from the consumer research commissioned by HSIS that significant numbers of people are not eating a diet that is healthy enough to provide all their nutrient needs.



Osteoporosis becomes increasingly common as we get older and the UK has some of the highest rates of the brittle bone condition in Europe. One in two women and one in five men over the age of 50 will suffer an osteoporotic fracture which could probably have been prevented.³⁶

Dr Emma Derbyshire says, “It’s estimated that healthcare costs for hip fractures alone cost £5 million a day, or £2 billion a year, and that figure will continue to rise as the population ages. But as the British Orthopaedic Association and British Geriatrics Society argue, ‘Looking after hip fracture patients well is a lot cheaper than looking after them badly’.³⁷

“To put this into perspective, women over the age of 45 will spend more days in hospital due to osteoporosis than they will for diabetes, heart attack or breast cancer, and every month 1,150 people die following a hip fracture.”

Dr Carrie Ruxton continues, “Risk reduction begins in childhood, adolescence and the early twenties, when we build up optimal bone density, and this requires sufficient intakes of calcium, vitamin D, protein and magnesium. We also know that a diet that is deficient in bone-building nutrients, particularly between the ages of 10 and 20 years, can result in lower peak bone mass.^{38,39}

“This is very worrying given the data showing that one in seven of the 11 to 18-year-old age group is now failing to get the LRNI for calcium while the same proportion are not achieving the recommended levels of vitamin D.”



Dr Nisa Aslam says, “We already have an epidemic of osteoporosis and bone fragility and failure to address these shortfalls will create an even bigger, and largely preventable, challenge for the NHS in years to come.

“If you avoid any food groups, are cutting calories to try to lose weight, skip meals or don’t eat five portions of fruit or vegetables every day, there is a strong argument for taking a multivitamin and multimineral supplement to help prevent any potential dietary deficiencies or shortfalls.”

LAST WORD

Dr Carrie Ruxton says, “You can’t put a price on good health, but we can count the costs of the many conditions and challenges which flow from having a poor diet — and many of these burdens are preventable.

“In the past decade or so, the rising levels of obesity have seen the focus on healthy eating shift from nutrients to calorie reduction, and along the way we seem to have lost, or muddled up, some very important health messages.”

Dr Pam Mason continues, “The newly-published analysis of dietary and nutrient trends since 1997, and the accompanying real-world research commissioned by the Health and Food Supplements Information Service (HSIS), shows that despite a deluge of information, many people are now thoroughly confused about their nutrient needs.

“Worrying numbers of adults are failing to achieve the recommended intakes of many key nutrients, so it’s perhaps not surprising that many are also showing signs of a potential deficiency.”

The new data shows:

- **43%** are experiencing tiredness
- **39%** report anxiety
- **33%** suffer low energy levels
- **28%** complained of low mood
- **27%** reported sleeping issues

Dr Gill Jenkins adds: “Diet alone is unlikely to solve all of these health and wellness problems, but we do know that poor diet can be a factor in all of them, so addressing any nutrient shortfalls may help, and it certainly won’t hurt.”

Dr Nisa Aslam notes further, “Busy lifestyles, skipping meals, diets which exclude particular food groups and a whole host of other factors can make it difficult to eat well every day, no matter how good our intentions.

“It’s also often cheaper to buy foods which are calorie-dense, yet nutrient-light, and the rising price of fresh produce is exacerbating this as this new consumer data shows. When buying food, price is now the biggest factor in decision making, with 41% saying cost is the most important factor, with nutritional value the decider for just 21% of consumers.”

Dr Carrie Ruxton sums up, “All the evidence suggests that many adults are not only running on less than a full tank of nutrients, but they are also setting themselves up for potential life-changing health problems in the future.

“Yet multivitamin and multimineral supplements, and beneficial dietary add-ons such as omega-3s or fish oils and probiotic supplements, provide a simple and inexpensive safety net to help ensure optimal daily nutrient intakes and a beneficial gut microbiome are achieved.”

For more information see www.hsis.org



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For further information or to arrange an interview with an HSIS spokesperson, please contact the HSIS press office HSIS@junglcatsolutions.com or call **020 3600 0228**. Out of hours please call **07867 513 361**.

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The Health and Food Supplements Information Service is funded by PAGB, the consumer healthcare association, which represents manufacturers of branded OTC medicines, self care medical devices and food supplements in the UK.

