

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK

**Q:** Should I take zinc?

**Dr. Heather  
Auld**

Zinc is a leading trace element in the human body, second only to iron. Zinc deficiency has been well-documented in people with liver diseases. However, supplementation with zinc protects against alcohol-induced liver injury in all people.

Zinc deficiency occurs more frequently in people with inflammatory bowel disease as well as in high blood pressure patients on thiazide diuretics or ACE inhibitors. Symptoms of deficiency include loss of appetite, unusual skin lesions and a poor immune system. Taking too much zinc may lead to a copper deficiency by not allowing copper absorption.

Long-term daily intake of zinc of more than 80 milligrams per day has been associated with a significant increase in hospitalizations for urinary problems. The upper level of zinc per day for both men and women is 40 milligrams.

Taking a multivitamin with balanced trace minerals is the best way to avoid both excess and deficiency of zinc.

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