

What is Zinc?

Zinc is a trace mineral found in your body. Even though your body only needs a small amount of zinc, many processes need it to keep your body functioning correctly. Zinc is required for cell growth, building proteins, healing damaged tissue and supporting a healthy immune system. It is essential during childhood and pregnancy since it is involved in cell growth.

Health Canada recommends a daily intake of approximately 8-11mg for adults, with requirements increasing during pregnancy and lactation. The maximal intake not likely to cause harmful effects on health in adults is 40mg daily.

Food Sources

Zinc is found in meats, poultry and seafood. Grains and legumes are also a source of zinc. However, absorption is much lower from these vegetarian sources.

- Shellfish: oysters, crab, lobster
- Beef
- Poultry
- Legumes
- Nuts, seeds
- Whole grains
- Fortified breakfast cereals

Supplements

Zinc is commonly available in pill and lozenge form. Since not all forms of zinc are absorbed equally through our gut system, it is essential to supplement with a quality product that is proven to have high absorption and retention in our bodies.

Zinc Deficiency

Zinc deficiency is rare but commonly seen in people with absorption issues. This includes conditions such as inflammatory bowel diseases, prolonged diarrhea and people who have undergone gastrointestinal surgery. It can also be seen in populations with increased zinc requirements or reduced intake, such as pregnancy and lactation or vegetarians/vegans.

Signs and Symptoms of zinc deficiency included:

- Hair loss
- Diarrhea
- Slow wound healing
- Decreased Immunity
- Poor appetite
- Loss of taste or smell
- Depressed mood

Drug-Induced Zinc depletion

Some common medications can cause zinc depletion. Certain blood pressure-lowering medications, such as Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors, loop diuretics, and thiazide diuretics, have been associated with zinc deficiency. Not every patient taking these medications will require supplementation, but taking these medications does increase your risk of deficiency and may warrant zinc monitoring.

If you take any of these medications, talk to your doctor or your Dispensaries Ltd. pharmacist today.