

Riboflavin

Why We Need It

Riboflavin, a water-soluble B vitamin, also is known as vitamin B₂. We need riboflavin to use the fats, carbohydrates, and proteins in the foods we eat. It helps us use these nutrients for energy in our bodies. In addition, riboflavin is needed to properly use other vitamins—niacin, folate, and vitamin B₆.

Enriched breads and cereals contain riboflavin. Look for the word “riboflavin” in the ingredient list on the label to see if it has been added.

INGREDIENTS: Enriched semolina (iron, thiamin mononitrate, folic acid, **riboflavin**, niacin), tomato, beet and spinach powders, ...

Recommended Daily Intakes of Riboflavin

	Age	Riboflavin (mg/day)
Infants	birth–6 months	0.3
	6 months–1 year	0.4
Children	1–3 years	0.5
	4–8 years	0.6
Males	9–13 years	0.9
	14 years and over	1.3
Females	9–13 years	0.9
	14–18 years	1.0
	19 years and over	1.1
	pregnant	1.4
	breastfeeding	1.6

mg = milligrams

Source: adapted from the Dietary Reference Intakes series, National Academies Press. Copyright 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, by the National Academies of Sciences.

Sources

Milk and milk products are good sources of riboflavin. It also is found in whole grains, meat, eggs and mushrooms. Green leafy vegetables and nuts provide smaller amounts.

Riboflavin is one of the four vitamins added to enriched grain products such as enriched flour. The other vitamins added to enriched grains are thiamin, niacin, and folic acid.

Sources of Riboflavin

Food	Riboflavin (mg per serving)
yogurt, 8 oz.	0.5
milk, 1 cup	0.4
ready-to-eat cereal, 1 cup	0.4
egg, cooked, 1 large	0.3
pork chop, cooked, 3 oz.	0.3
mushrooms, cooked, ½ cup	0.2
cottage cheese, ½ cup	0.2
mg = milligrams oz = ounces	

Ways to Retain It

Riboflavin is easily destroyed when exposed to light. Therefore, milk stored in glass and exposed to light loses much of its riboflavin content. Opaque plastic jugs and paper cartons protect the riboflavin in milk. Only small amounts are lost in cooking.

If We Don't Get Enough

Most people get plenty of riboflavin in their diets, because it is found in a variety of foods. A deficiency occurs only when the diet is very poor and lacks many nutrients.

A lack of riboflavin causes sores in the mouth, cracks and redness at the corners of the mouth, and

inflammation of the tongue. It also can affect the body's use of other vitamins.

Supplements

Since most people get enough riboflavin in their diets, supplements usually are not needed. Most multivitamin supplements contain riboflavin.

Research has not found problems from consuming too much riboflavin from food or supplements. However, it is not necessary to take a supplement that contains more than 100 to 150% of the Daily Value for riboflavin.

For More Information

The Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) agent at your county Extension office may have more written information and nutrition classes for you to attend. Also, your doctor, health care provider, or a registered dietitian (RD) can provide reliable information.

Reliable nutrition information may be found on the Internet at the following sites:

<http://hgic.clemson.edu>

<http://virtual.clemson.edu/groups/NIRC/>

<http://www.eatright.org>

<http://www.nutrition.gov>

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic>

Sources:

1. Turner, R. Elaine. University of Florida Extension. Facts About Riboflavin. FCS8668. August 2006.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publications.html>

2. National Academies of Sciences. National Academies Press. Dietary Reference Intakes series. 2004.

This information has been reviewed and adapted for use in South Carolina by Janis G. Hunter, HGIC Nutrition Specialist, and Katherine L. Cason, Professor, State Program Leader for Food Safety and Nutrition, Clemson University. (New 07/07.)

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