

# Do It For Yourself

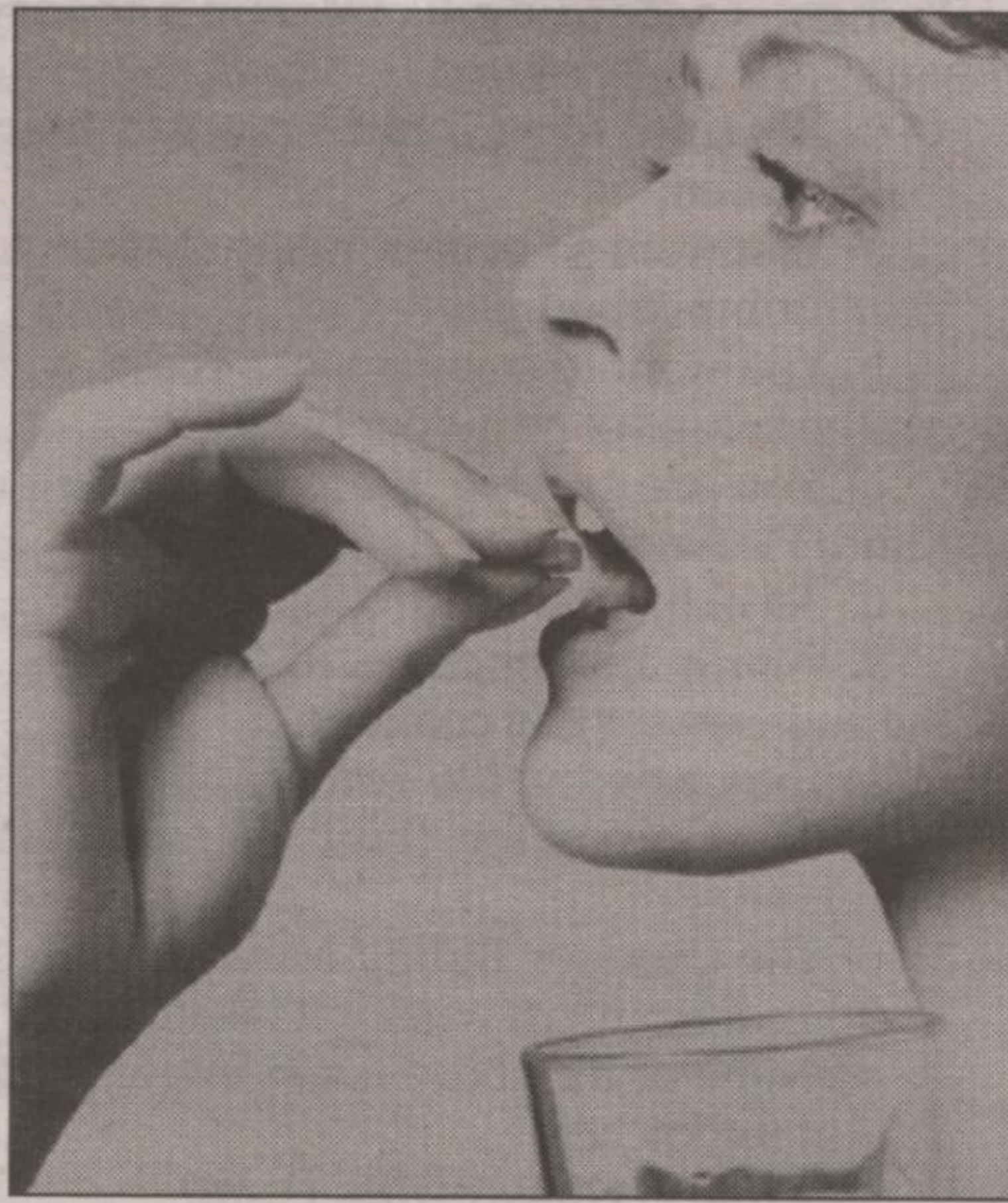
## Stress, diet, inactivity can all lead to vitamin deficiencies

If you lead an inactive lifestyle, eat poorly or are exposed to high levels of stress in your work and/or personal life, you may be at risk of developing a vitamin deficiency.

"There are many causes for vitamin deficiencies, however the most common one I see in my practice is an inadequate diet," says Penny Kendall-Reed, naturopathic doctor. "It is very difficult to get nutrient-rich foods in your diet when you are on the run - which many of us are in today's society."

Symptoms and diseases associated with being vitamin deficient can range from constant fatigue, insomnia, irritability and poor concentration to "clinical deficiencies" such as scurvy, which occurs with a lack of Vitamin C. Clinical deficiencies take several months to occur and are less common than non-specific symptoms such as fatigue.

Kendall-Reed cites that those on very strict or "fad" diets may be at risk for developing vitamin deficiencies. And,



too many "empty calories" consumed from simple carbohydrates like bread and pasta rather than fruits and vegetables, can lead to vitamin deficiencies. Strict vegetarians who do not consume

nutritionally sound alternatives to animal protein are another risk group. This group can be deficient in vitamin B12 as it is found in animal products.

Lifestyle factors can play a tremendous role in vitamin status. Smokers for instance, require 50 per cent more vitamin C than their non-smoking counterparts. And, women who take oral contraceptives require added vitamin B6 and folic acid.

"Even when recovering from surgery your vitamin needs are much different," says Kendall-Reed. "Many people don't realize that a surgery or long illness can take a tremendous toll on your body, and can run you the risk of developing one or more vitamin deficiencies."

Lastly, those who have poor absorption and digestion may be more likely to develop vitamin deficiencies. The elderly are particularly at risk, as are those who take long-term medications. Some medicines upset the vitamin balance in the body by changing the ability to absorb, use, store or excrete vitamins from food.

"It is extremely difficult to get everything your body needs from food alone. Even if you eat properly, most of our food today is processed and you also lose nutrients in storage and cooking," says Kendall-Reed. "Taking a high quality multi-vitamin like one from the Jamieson Vita-Vim<sup>®</sup> line is a great addition to your diet and will help combat stress and fatigue as well as increase energy levels."

### VITAMIN FACTS

- adolescents need more vitamins than adults.
- women who are pregnant or breast feeding need extra vitamins.
- cigarette smokers require 50 per cent more Vitamin C than non-smokers.
- B Vitamins help digest carbohydrates, fats and proteins.
- Vitamin D promotes absorption of calcium

## What you should be looking for when purchasing a multi-vitamin

How do you know what to look for in a multi-vitamin? The grocery stores and health food aisles are stocked with a multitude of options but it can be difficult to determine just what would be best for you.

Penny Kendall-Reed, naturopathic doctor, suggests looking for the following when making a multi-vitamin purchase:

chase:

- organic or chelated mineral sources for better and higher nutrient absorption
- higher and more varied levels of antioxidant nutrients to combat environmental and physical stresses
- natural vitamin E, rather than synthetic, for better absorption
- digestive enzymes to improve digestion and absorption

- higher levels of B6, B12 and folic acid to support the heart
- higher levels of B vitamins to help neutralize the negative affects of high sugar, salt, protein-rich and processed food, and everyday mental and physical demands placed on the body
- a 2:1 ratio of calcium to magnesium, to mirror what exists in the body
- vitamin D3 instead of D2, for better absorption

- low or no iron, since recent evidence indicates excess iron may increase the potential of heart attacks
- no phosphorous. Today's diets usually have high or excessive amounts of phosphorous
- no artificial preservatives, flavours or colours
- no sucrose sugar, sodium, starch or mineral oil.

—News Canada

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