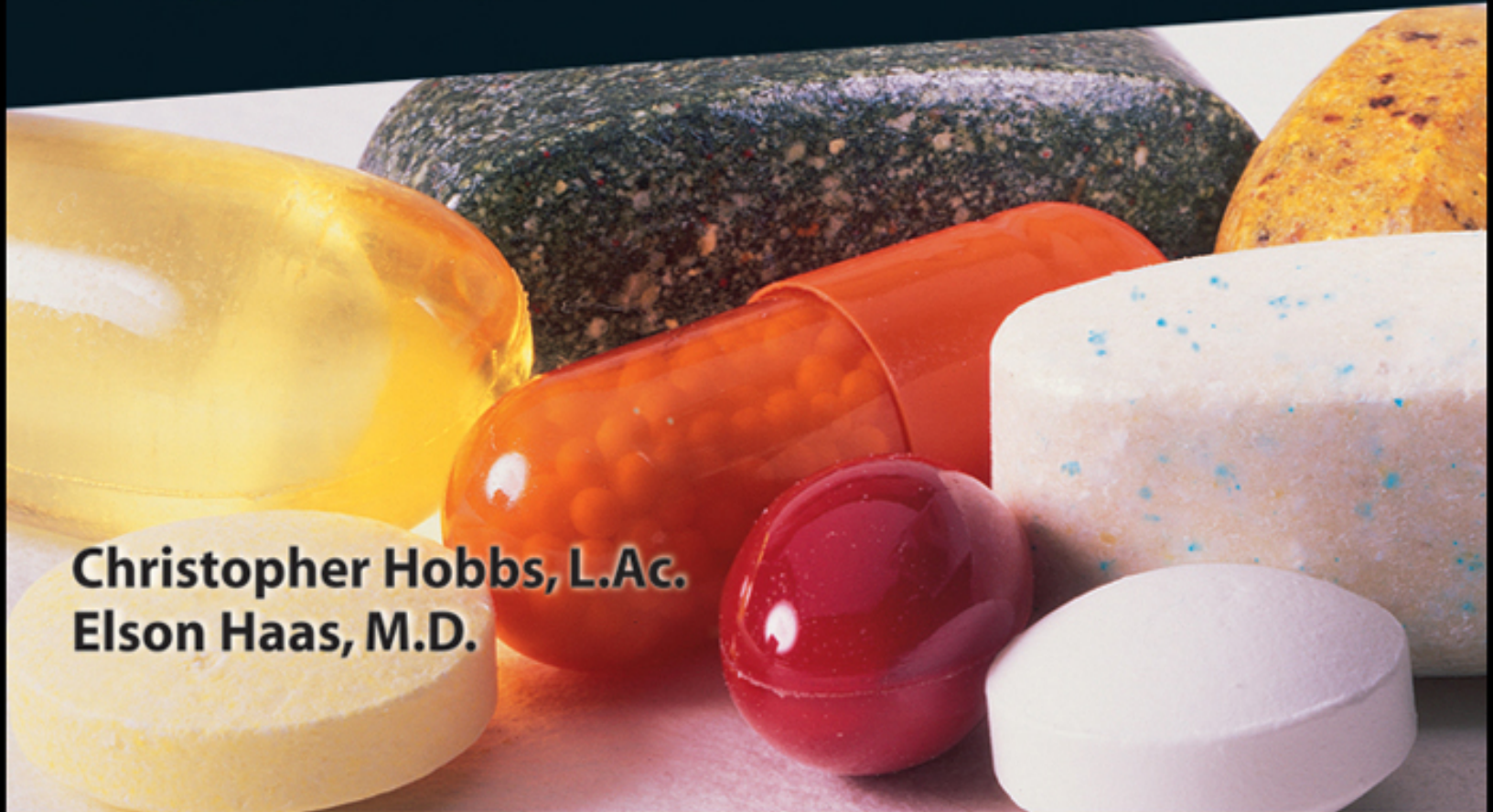


*Your complete A-to-Zinc guide to vitamins,
minerals, herbs, enzymes, hormones, amino acids, and other nutritional supplements*

Vitamins

FOR

DUMMIES[®]



**Christopher Hobbs, L.Ac.
Elson Haas, M.D.**

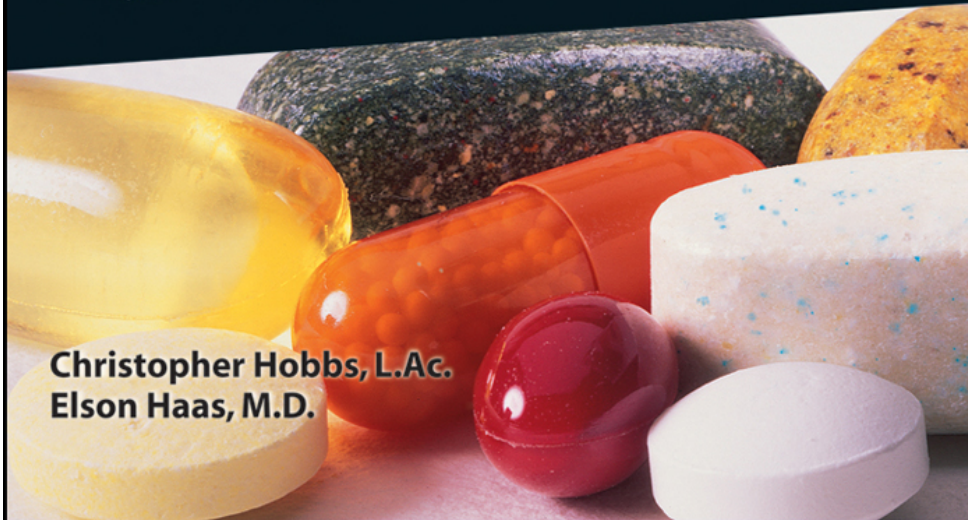
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A Reference for the Rest of Us!™

Vitamins For Dummies

by Christopher Hobbs, L.Ac, and Elson Haas, M.D.

Vitamins For Dummies'

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About the Authors

Christopher Hobbs, L.Ac., is a fourth-generation herbalist and botanist — his grandmother and great-grandmother were professional herbalists, and his father and great-uncle were professors of botany — with over 30 years experience with herbs. He studied acupuncture, Chinese herbs, and Chinese medicine at Michael and Lesley Tierra's East-West Acupuncture Program, Five Branches Institute of Traditional Medicine in Santa Cruz, and The Hangzhou School of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Hangzhou, China, earning his license in acupuncture in 1995. In 1989, he founded the American School of Herbalism in Santa Cruz, California (with Michael Tierra, O.M.D., L.Ac.) to educate professional and lay persons in the safe use of medicinal plants. He is currently the director of the Christopher Hobbs Clinic of Phytotherapy and Acupuncture, as a licensed primary health care provider in California.

In 1985, Christopher co-founded the American Herbalists Guild, the only national U.S. organization for professional herbalists, and along with David Winston, is a senior member on the admissions committee. As a consultant to the herb and natural foods industry, he was vice president and a board of trustee member of the American Herbal Products Association (AHPA) for seven years, has formulated many nationally-sold products, and is a member of a number of top companies. In 1984, he started a line of herbal products now known as Rainbow Light Herbal Systems. Christopher has acted as director

of herbal formulations for Rainbow Light since 1984. He currently consults for the pharmaceutical and natural products industry and is a major contributor to the successful herbal Web site, www.allherb.com.

Christopher is a member of the Society for Medicinal Plants, the Society for Economic Botany, and the Society for Ethnobiology. He has lectured at Yale and Stanford Medical Schools; is a regular teacher at the University of California, Santa Cruz; and has taught at numerous schools, conventions, and symposia throughout the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe.

Christopher regularly contributes a clinic column in *Herbs for Health*, and his articles have appeared in *HerbalGram*, *Natural Health*, *Vegetarian Times*, *Let's Live*, and other national health magazines. Christopher is currently on the advisory boards of the American Botanical Council, United Plant Savers, *Let's Live* magazine, *Herbs for Health*, and other organizations and magazines. He owns one of the most extensive private libraries on medicinal plants, with over 6,000 volumes, including herb books that date from the sixteenth century. He is in the process of developing a medicinal plant preserve and educational center called the *Living Pharmacy*.

Elson Haas, M.D., has been in medical practice for over 25 years and has helped develop the field he refers to as *Integrated Medicine*. He is the founder and director of the Preventive Medical Center of Marin, an integrated health care facility in San Rafael, California, where he specializes in Nutritional Medicine and Detoxification. He is also the author of five previous books on health and nutrition: *Staying Healthy With the Seasons*, *Staying Healthy With Nutrition*, *A Diet for All Seasons*, *The Detox Diet*, and *The Staying Healthy Shopper's Guide*.

After his graduation from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1972, Elson received his further training in Northern California, where he has since resided. After his internship, he began further studies in many health-related fields — nutrition, herbology, Oriental medicine, exercise physiology, body therapies, and mind-body medicine — fulfilling his goal to learn something about health and healing after so many years of studying disease. Over the last two decades, Dr. Haas has incorporated, or to use a better word, “integrated,” these many healing disciplines into his family medical practice. He wrote about this process in his first book, *Staying Healthy with the Seasons*, published in 1981 and now in its 22nd printing.

With the great progress, awareness, and acceptance of nutritional and alternative medicine, Haas has been in the midst of this rapidly growing field. The wide availability and utilization of the thousand of products now available on the shelves of many types of stores is what makes *Vitamins For Dummies* essential reading to assist people in interpreting this complex field in order to achieve the great health and longevity benefits of supplementation.

Dr. Haas travels and teaches nationally and appears on numerous radio shows. He is a professional consultant for many health writers and magazines, including *Natural Health*, *Women’s World*, and *Let’s Live*. His upcoming book, published by Ballantine Books, is titled *The False Fat Diet*, about food allergies and reactions and their association to body swelling and weight. Elson lives on a farm in Northern California where he raises food and animals (llamas, ducks, guinea pigs — his idol is Dr. Doolittle, after all!) with his wife and their two children.

Contact Dr. Elson Haas and sign up for his free newsletter and receive other health information at his Web site, www.elsonhaas.com

Dedication

I dedicate this book to Beth, my partner in crime and a few legal activities (like writing this book) as well. Beth has supported me through tough times and shared in the joy of many fun and loving times, too. Our mutual love of plants, mushrooms, walking in the woods, and a life and home in nature with wild animals and plants brings extra beauty to each of our lives. We make a good team, and we still are able to be kids together and keep our sense of humor about life, at least most of the time. The miracle to me is that Beth has been able to put up with all my eccentricities (a nice way of putting it) and still keeps loving me. For this I'm forever grateful and blessed.

- Christopher Hobbs

I want to thank my wife Tara and our children for supporting me and allowing me to take the time needed on the computer and phone to complete *Vitamins For Dummies*. Even though there always seems to be so much to do, they remind me how important it is to take time to play, love one another, and generally keep the balance in my life.

- Elson Haas

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I want to express my appreciation to Stephen Brown, N.D., my long-time friend, and scientific advisor for much of this work. His incredible knowledge of the medical and nutritional literature is amazing, and even more, his ability to evaluate the quality and bottom line of many diverse studies was extremely valuable in the writing of this book. We wanted to write a book that was fun to use, easy to read, accessible and practical, and more, could clearly separate the supplements that really have some demonstrated effects from the ones mainly promoted by manufacturers for profit, but that had no history of use or proven benefits. *Vitamins For Dummies* comes much closer to this ideal goal because of his efforts.

My partner Beth contributed greatly to this project in every way as editor, writer, compiler, and researcher.

I want to also acknowledge my co-author, Dr. Elson Haas. Elson has been a complete joy to work with. He helped keep the project on track and was always encouraging us with frequent communication to make sure we were meeting our time and content commitments. My belief that the two worlds of modern medicine and natural healing and herbalism are coming together is supported by the similarity of our philosophical and practical approaches to healing. Of course, Elson has lived and written about natural healing and herbal medicine for

many years, and we both believe that whole foods, a good diet, regular exercise, and other good health habits always come first before supplements, no matter how helpful they may be.

Western medicine is then saved for crisis care and technological advances, not for maintaining health. That's up to each of us in our daily acts!

I also give humble thanks to my teachers, Paul C. Bragg, and my mother, Eli, who taught me much about nutrition and health.

Our editor, Stacey Mickelbart, was super-efficient and energetically-compatible throughout the project. I respect her skills as a writer, editor, and project manager. Her help and support, and the help of her editorial assistants, made the writing of *Vitamins For Dummies* an enjoyable experience.

Thanks to all our technical editors, especially Dr. Donald R. Davis for his invaluable input.

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We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Online Registration Form located at www.dummies.com/register/

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Introduction

Congratulations! If you picked up *Vitamins For Dummies*

Scientists agree that developing healthy habits can keep us feeling young longer and extend the years we have to enjoy all that life has to offer. But not all scientists agree that taking vitamins, minerals, and herbs, much less enzymes or hormones like DHEA, extends your life and prevents or treats disease. Hundreds of exciting new scientific studies show how the regular use of dietary supplements like vitamin E can promote good health and prevent disease, but these studies are scattered on the Web and in vast shelves of journals in medical libraries, and may not be easy to reach or understand.

To write *Vitamins For Dummies*, we reviewed thousands of studies and combined our 60 years of personal use, clinical practice, and research experience to help you make informed choices about dietary supplements. Although we're always keeping an eye on the safety of supplements, we point out effective programs, including therapeutic diets and other healthy habits, to help you stay young and enjoy life longer than ever before.

About This Book

In order to maintain your health, you probably already know that some personal research and experimentation is necessary. Health is a lifelong journey that works best when you take charge of your own process. We encourage you to experiment with the supplements we cover in this book, especially after reading the appropriate sections and gaining an understanding of how isolated nutrients can affect the balance of other nutrients and processes in your body.

In *Vitamins For Dummies*, we summarize the most important facts you need to know to put the supplements to work right away for maximum effectiveness. And we carefully review the most important side effects and situations when you should not take certain supplements. We review which supplements can be taken together and give you recommended programs for your particular needs and concerns. These programs have been carefully reviewed for modern scientific support. We add to the science many reports from our patients about what works for them with the greatest convenience and least number of problems. We tell you what is known about potential interactions between drugs, herbs, and other nutritional substances.

Because diet, health, and supplementation should be fun for maximum benefit, we invite you to enjoy *Vitamins For Dummies*. Turn to any page or chapter, and you will find clear ideas and guidelines for action. You also find easy-to-understand instructions about when to avoid taking some supplements, so you can put the power of vitamins,