

Selenium – The Health Connection

Selenium is an essential trace mineral that is present in all tissues of the body and has a powerful, wide-ranging influence on health. The best known and perhaps most important biological function of selenium is its role as an antioxidant and anticancer mineral. It is an essential part of good health because it serves as a scavenger that helps remove free radicals from the body.

Many studies indicate an association between low levels of selenium and the increased risk of heart disease, cancer, and other illnesses. Selenium protects red blood cells and cell membranes from damage by free radicals. It also works closely with vitamin E, another antioxidant.

Selenium helps to protect and maintain the circulatory, digestive, and reproductive organs; works to prevent or correct cadmium, mercury, arsenic, or other heavy metal toxicity; and gives protection from the flood of toxins that invade the body every day. These many roles are explained by selenium's activity at the cellular and subcellular levels where it prevents the destruction and decay of cellular functions.

People do not maintain healthy selenium levels in the body for two reasons: the type of diet they eat and the low selenium content of the soil in which their food is grown. It becomes evident there is a strong correlation between the low selenium content of soils and the incidence of certain illnesses.

Selenium is present in all the tissues of the body, but is concentrated in the kidneys, liver, spleen, pancreas, and testes. A large body of evidence points to the accumulation and retention of this substance in white blood cells and other lymphoid cells. In order for the body to be able to produce the powerful antioxidants needed, selenium is essential. People with selenium deficiencies often are more susceptible to the effects of free radical damage that may lead to the development of cancer.

Forms of Selenium

Selenium is found in soil in its inorganic form, but plants and micro-organisms convert the mineral to naturally organic forms. These organic forms are the only true nutritional source for humans. Seleno-organic compounds, primarily L-(+)selenomethionine extracted from selenium-rich yeast or ocean plants are generally recognized as the safest and most effective form of selenium supplementation. This form is available on this web site. For more information read my booklet, *Selenium – The Health Connection*.

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