

### FORTIFIED BEVERAGES: ARE THEY REALLY HEALTHY?

Fortified beverages are bottled drinks or water containing vitamins, minerals, fibre, antioxidants and herbal ingredients. Owing to increased consumer awareness and changes in consumers' choice, the consumption of fortified beverages has increased dramatically over the past few years. Competition in the category has prompted claims of these beverages being beneficial for health. Is that actually true?

#### VITAMIN WATER AND IMMUNITY

There is little or no clinical evidence about a correlation between vitamin intake and immunity. Contrary to the claimed benefits by marketers, these vitamin products have high levels of caffeine which can cause harm to the body. Some of these beverages contain Gurana, a plant extract known for its high caffeine content and stimulating nature. Vitamins which many brands contain, including water-soluble vitamins such as vitamin B6, B12, C and niacin, can be obtained from many natural food sources, negating the need to depend on vitamin fortified beverages.

#### DO FORTIFIED BEVERAGES BENEFIT DURING PREGNANCY?

No. The required amount of minerals and vitamins are easily available through natural foods during pregnancy. However, if additional nutrients are required, physicians may prescribe supplements to make up for the deficiencies.

#### ARE FORTIFIED BEVERAGES IMPORTANT FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE FOR ATHLETES?

Some manufacturers claim that fortified beverages are good for athletes. However, research suggests that athletes taking a balanced diet do not require extra minerals, unless they are involved in strenuous games which lead to profuse sweating, resulting in loss of minerals. Likewise, claims about benefits of taurine, an amino acid touted to be good for muscles, is not supported by studies.

#### THE BOTTOM LINE

- Drinking fortified beverages occasionally is not harmful.
- Some brands contain sugar content comparable to that found in soft drinks, which may lead to weight gain.
- Balanced diet comprising fruits and vegetables are more beneficial for the body and give all recommended nutrients.
- Save money and environment from plastic by choosing healthy foods.



References:

<https://livehealthyosu.com/2014/09/29/are-sports-drinks-energy-drink-vitamin-waters-necessary/>



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