I have had many patients express that they were told by their doctor that they did not need vitamins because their diet was so healthy.  That could not be more untrue.  While eating a healthy diet should provide a good balance of nutrition, our soil is depleted thus providing inadequate nutrition to our feed to meet our daily needs.  For this reason, we all should take a regular multivitamin.

With regard to specific vitamins, I will provide basic information about each vitamin and mineral and the benefits provided.

Vitamins A, D, E, and K are all fat soluble and need to be taken with caution due to risk of excess or overdosing.  All of the other vitamins are water soluble and are peed out rather than accumulated in our fat stores, hence risk of overdosing is minimal to none.

**VItamin A**includes retinoids and carotenoids. It is important in vision, lowering prostate and lung cancer risks.  It aids in bone growth, supporting the immune system, maintaining health of the skin and tissues, and preventing cararacts. They may act as antioxidants.   Vitamin A is fat soluble so caution is advised to not take in too much which can damage bones.  Beef, liver, eggs, shrimp, butter, and some cheeses contain retinoids.  Sweet potatoes, carrots, spinach, mangoes, pumpkins and squash contain beta carotene.

**Vitamin B1**, otherwise known as thiamin, makes energy out of food and helps support the health of hair, skin, muscles, brain and aids in nerve function.  It is water soluble so we typically pee out excess intake of water soluble vitamins. It is naturally found in pork chops, brown rice, acorn squash, watermelon, ham and soy milk.

**Vitamin B2**, riboflavin, also makes energy from food and is important in hair, skin, blood and brain nutrition. It is found in milk, eggs, cheese, yogurt, meats, leafy greens, grains and cereals.

**Vitamin B3,** Niacin, is also essential for healthy blood, brain, skin and nerves.  It makes energy from food.  It is found in meat, fish, chicken, grains, potatoes, mushrooms and peanut butter.  The amino acid, tryptophan, and Vitamin B6 can help make this vitamin.

**Vitamin B5**, pantothenic acid, helps make energy as well as fats, steroid hormones, hemoglobin, and neurotransmitters. It is found in chickens, egg yolk, whole grains, tomatoes, avocados, mushrooms, broccoli and other nutritious foods.  A deficiency in B5 can cause paresthesias or burning in the feet.

**Vitamin B6**, pyridoxine, reduces homocysteine levels which helps decrease heart disease risks.  It converts tryptophan to niacin and serotonin which aid in sleep and appetite and mood.  It helps make blood cells, aid in cognition and immune function. It is found in meat, fish, chicken, legumes, soy, potatoes, fruits such as banana and melon.

**Vitamin B9**, folic acid, can decrease homocysteine levels helping prevent heart disease. It is also helpful against colon and breast cancer.  It is important to take in pregnancy to help prevent brain and spinal cord defects. It is involved in new cell creation.  It is found in asparagus, okra, spinach, turnip greens, broccoli, legumes, and some juices.

**​Vitamin B12**, cobalamin, also lowers homocysteine levels to help prevent heart disease. It also protects nerves and helps growth of red blood cells and DNA.  It is found in meat, chicken, fish, milk, cheese, eggs, and soy.  Seeing that it is primarily found in animal products, many people especially if vegan or vegetarian or those who have trouble with absorption of this vitamin are deficient which leads to arm and leg paresthesias, memory loss and dementia.

**Biotin** helps make hair and bones healthy. It converts food to energy and breaks down fatty acids.  It is found in whole grains, organ meats, egg yolks, fish and soy. It may be indigestible by some.

Ascorbic Acid, **Vitamin C**,  may decrease some cancers.  It helps make collagen which helps with building vessel walls and wound healing.  It helps make serotonin and norepinephrine and works as an antioxidant helping immunity.  It is found in fruits, potatoes, peppers, broccoli, spinach, tomatoes, and Brussel sprouts.

**Vitamin D**, calciferol, maintains Calcium and phosphorus levels to help strengthen bones, supports teeth and bones. It is converted in our skin from the sunlight but if one lives in northern climates or does not go out in the sun, it is hard to get enough. It is in fortified cereals and milk and naturally in fatty fish.

**Vitamin E**, alpha tocopherol, works as an antioxidant protecting various cells from damage.  It is found in vegetable oils, wheat germ, leafy greens, whole grains and nuts.

**Choline** metabolized and transports fats. It also makes acetyl choline which is important in nerve function. It is found in salmon, eggs, milk, liver and peanuts.

**Vitamin K**, phylloquinone or menadione, is important in clotting blood and preventing hip fractures.  It is found in cabbage, liver, eggs, milk, spinach, broccoli, sprouts, kale, collards, and other greens.  Vitamin K is make by intestinal bacteria as well.

https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/listing\_of\_vitamins