Vitamin C Cheat Sheet

What is Vitamin C?

- Known as the "immune booster," Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) is a powerful antioxidant that supports immunity, skin health, and wound healing.
- It's water-soluble and must be consumed daily through food or supplements, as the body cannot produce or store it.

Roles of Vitamin C in the Body

- **Antioxidant Protection:** Neutralizes free radicals, reducing oxidative stress and inflammation.
- **Immune Support:** Enhances white blood cell function and helps fight infections.
- **Collagen Production:** Essential for skin, cartilage, tendons, and blood vessels.
- **Wound Healing:** Accelerates tissue repair and regeneration.
- **Brain Health:** Supports neurotransmitter synthesis and protects brain cells from oxidative damage.

Signs of Deficiency (Scurvy)

- **Frequent Infections:** Weak immune response leads to colds and prolonged illnesses.
- **Slow Wound Healing:** Cuts and bruises take longer to recover.
- **Bleeding Gums:** Gum inflammation and bleeding, particularly during brushing.
- **Skin Problems:** Dry, rough skin and tiny red spots due to weakened blood vessels.
- **Fatigue and Weakness:** Persistent tiredness and low energy levels.
- **Joint and Muscle Pain:** Caused by collagen degradation and inflammation.
- **Swollen or Painful Joints:** Often linked to severe deficiency.
- **Mood Changes:** Irritability and depression due to neurotransmitter imbalances.

Who is at Risk?

- **Smokers:** Smoking increases oxidative stress and depletes Vitamin C levels.
- **Individuals with Poor Diets:** Low intake of fruits and vegetables leads to deficiency.
- **People with Chronic Illnesses:** Conditions like diabetes or cancer increase Vitamin C demands.
- **Elderly:** Reduced dietary intake and absorption with age.

- **Stress-Prone Individuals:** High stress depletes Vitamin C levels.
- **Alcoholics:** Chronic alcohol use interferes with nutrient absorption.

Top Sources of Vitamin C

Foods:

- **Fruits:** Oranges, kiwis, strawberries, guavas, papayas, and grapefruit.
- **Vegetables:** Bell peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, kale, spinach, and cauliflower.
- **Herbs:** Parsley and thyme.

Supplements:

- **Vitamin C Complex:** Look for either pure extract from food or a blend of ascorbic acid with fruit extracts like acerola cherry, camu camu, or rose hips for enhanced efficacy.
- **Liposomal Vitamin C:** Offers enhanced absorption by delivering Vitamin C directly into cells.

How Much Vitamin C Do You Need?

- **Recommended Daily Intake:**
    - Adults: 75–90 mg/day
    - Smokers: +35 mg/day
    - Pregnant Women: 85 mg/day
    - Breastfeeding Women: 120 mg/day
- **Upper Limit:** 2,000 mg/day to avoid side effects like stomach upset or diarrhea.

Vitamin C Dos and Don’ts

Do:

- Choose a Vitamin C complex for better bioavailability and effectiveness.
- Consume Vitamin C-rich foods daily, focusing on fresh, raw produce.
- Use liposomal or buffered Vitamin C supplements if dietary intake is insufficient.

Don’t:

- Overheat Vitamin C-rich foods; heat destroys ascorbic acid.
- Rely solely on ascorbic acid supplements without additional fruit extracts for synergy.

Boosting Your Levels

- **Step 1:** Prioritize Vitamin C-rich foods like oranges, bell peppers, and kale in your daily meals.
- **Step 2:** Use a high-quality Vitamin C complex supplement if dietary intake is insufficient.
- **Step 3:** Adjust intake based on stress, illness, or environmental factors to maintain optimal levels.

Vitamin C is essential for immunity, collagen production, and antioxidant defense. Opt for a complex blend or food-based sources to ensure maximum benefits! 🌿