

SCALPEL-FREE BUTT LIFT
SKIP THE SQUATS!

BLAST MORE FAT
ON YOUR LUNCH BREAK

SHAPE
YOUR
LIFE

SHAPE

**LOOK
BETTER
NAKED**
IN 4 WEEKS
p. 114

EXCLUSIVE!

**FITTER
THAN EVER
AT 52!**

ALL NEW!
SIMPLE 4-STEP PLAN

**ELLEN
DEGENERES**

**"MY ALL-DAY
ENERGY DIET"**

PLUS: THE
EXERCISE ROUTINE
SHE DOES EVERY
MORNING

**FLAT
SEXY
ABS**
BY MAY 31

**WEIGHT LOSS
MADE EASY**

**"HOW I LOST
105 POUNDS!"**

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**25-SECOND
HAIR
MAKEOVER**

**A BETTER
WAY TO
TAKE YOUR
VITAMINS**

**5 SLIM-DOWN
SMOOTHIES**

(WITH A HEALTHY TWIST)

a better way to get your vitamins?



Most women don't meet their nutritional needs through diet alone, which is why supplementing is key. But with so many options available—tablets, liquids, fizzes, and more—it's hard to know what to take. We asked top experts for the scoop. BY SHARON LIAO

SHOULD YOU... POP THEM? Taking a daily pill is an easy way to get 100 percent of the recommended daily allowance of many disease-fighting vitamins and minerals, like folic acid, vitamin C, vitamin D, and selenium. Tablets are usually the cheapest, but if you have a hard time swallowing them or they upset your stomach, it may be worth spending a little extra on capsules (either soft gel or powder) or enteric tablets, which have a coating designed to break down in the small intestine, not the stomach. Don't, however, fall for "fast-absorbing" claims.

Unlike painkillers or heartburn medication, it doesn't matter how quickly vitamins and minerals are broken down in the body. In fact, for some nutrients, fast absorption could be a drawback.

But even the priciest capsules in the world won't do much good if you don't take them the right way. "Pair multis and calcium pills with food to fend off possible stomach irritation and, in some cases, enhance absorption," says Roberta Anding, R.D., a spokeswoman for the

American Dietetic Association who is based in Houston. (Other nutrients, such as iron, may be better digested on an empty stomach.)

If you're sipping coffee,

TIP When swallowing a pill, look down your nose instead of tilting your head back. This helps wash it down, so it won't get stuck in your throat.

tea, or wine with your meal, wait 15 minutes before taking your supplement. "These beverages contain

compounds called tannins, which can block the uptake of certain nutrients," explains Duffy MacKay, the vice president of scientific and regulatory affairs for the Council for Responsible Nutrition in Washington, D.C. Caffeine also speeds up the gastrointestinal tract, so your body may not have a chance to digest all the nutrients.

SHOULD YOU... SIP OR EAT THEM? From breakfast cereals and energy bars to flavored waters and juices,

smart eating 101

supermarket and health food store shelves are packed with products fortified with vitamins, minerals, omega-3 fatty acids, and other nutrients. "You can use these foods and beverages to shore up your diet," says Anding. And they're a good choice for people who don't like taking pills.

But do keep track of how many fortified foods you eat throughout the day, especially if you're also taking a multi or another supplement. In that case, you might run the risk of exceeding the upper limits for certain nutrients. For instance, getting more than 2,500 milligrams of calcium a day can lead to kidney stones. Other nutrients you can overdo it on include iron (consume no more than 45 milligrams per day), zinc (40 milligrams), and vitamin A (10,000 international units).

If you decide to skip the pills entirely and go the fortified food route, read labels carefully and pick products that have nutritional advantages—for example, calcium-enriched orange juice or a whole-grain cereal, like Total. Other good choices include PowerBar ProteinPlus Reduced Sugar and vitaminwater zero, which is made with

Truvia, a no-calorie stevia-based natural sweetener.

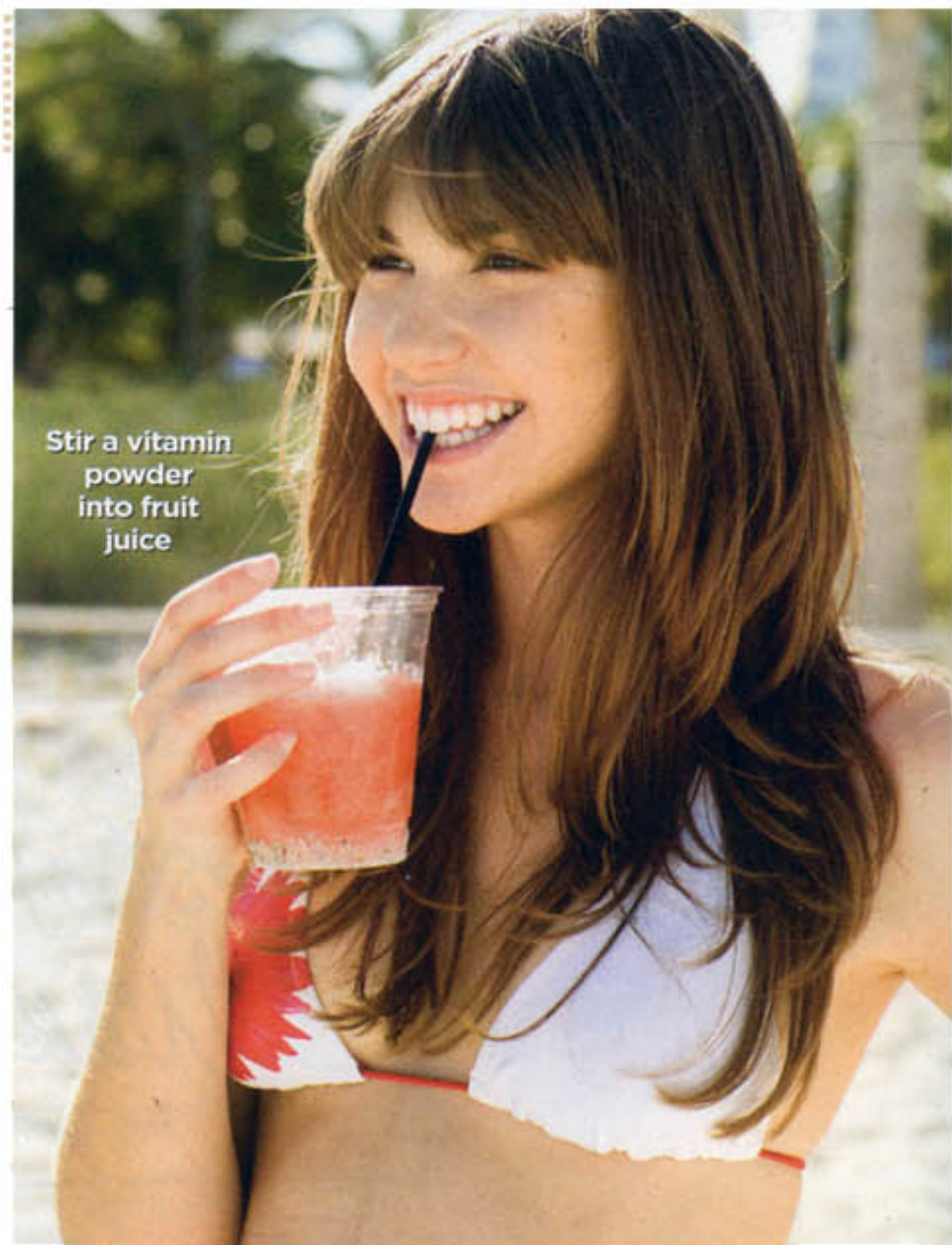
SHOULD YOU...

CHEW THEM? Perhaps the sweetest way to meet your daily nutritional needs is with candylike supplements. In addition to the Flintstones chewables your mom used to give you, there are gummies, like Hero Nutritionals Slice of Life (\$20; gnc.com); jelly beans, such as Nutrition Now Adult Multi Beans (\$8; vitaminshoppe.com); and caramel or chocolate chews, like Viactiv Calcium Soft Chews (\$11; drugstore.com).

"The sweet flavor of these products may make it easier for you to

TIP Store supplements in your nightstand. Keeping them in your kitchen or bathroom may make them less potent—research reveals heat and humidity can degrade water-soluble vitamins, such as C.

remember to take your vitamins," says MacKay. "Look for adult formulas, though, since children's versions won't provide all the nutrients you need." One caveat: Since these treats taste like, well, candy, it may be tempting to snack on them—particularly those fudgy chews—yet some may contain 100 calories per



Stir a vitamin powder into fruit juice

dose. "Not only will this affect your waistline, you'll also up your odds of overdosing on certain vitamins and minerals," says MacKay.

SHOULD YOU... POUR THEM?

A spoonful of powder makes the vitamins go down better for some women—and adds an extra glass of H₂O to your daily tally. Try stirring a packet of

Emergen-C Vitamin C Fizzy Drink Mix (\$12 for 30 packets; walgreens.com) or a teaspoonful of the Vitamin Shoppe Multi Vitamin & Mineral Powder (\$25; vitaminshoppe.com) into water or another beverage. Hate the fishy aftertaste of omega-3 pills? Consider Nordic Naturals Omega-3 Effervescent (\$13 for 7

packets; nordicnaturals.com), which tastes like orange soda.

SHOULD YOU...

INJECT THEM? Rumor has it that celebrities, like Britney Spears and Lindsay Lohan, get vitamin shots and even IV drips for an instant boost of energy. But these cocktails, which can include vitamins B₁₂ and C, often contain megadoses. "There's no need to get an injection unless you're seriously deficient in a nutrient," says Anding—and that can be determined only by your physician through a blood test.

Depending on your levels, your doctor may prescribe a shot or high-dose supplement, or recommend liquid vitamin/mineral drops, which are applied beneath your tongue for direct absorption into the bloodstream. ☺