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# Zinc



Zinc is a mineral that's important to the body in many ways. Zinc keeps the immune system strong, helps heal wounds, and supports normal growth.

Zinc deficiency occurs frequently in developing countries. Zinc deficiency in the U.S. is rare, because most diets provide more than the recommended dietary allowance.

## Why do people take zinc?

Zinc has become a popular treatment for the [common cold](#). Some studies have found that zinc lozenges may reduce the duration of cold, perhaps by a day or so, and may reduce the number of upper respiratory infections in

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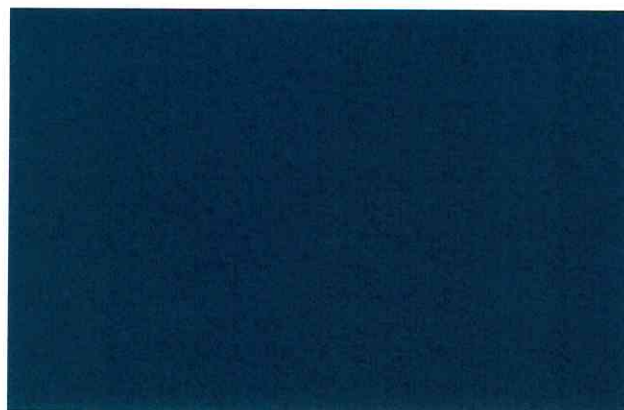
Zinc helps fight infection and heal wounds. However, if you already have enough zinc from your diet, it is not clear that getting even more -- from supplements -- has a benefit.

Topical zinc is used to treat [diaper rash](#) and [skin](#) irritations. Zinc has also been shown to help with ulcers, [ADHD](#), [acne](#), sickle cell anemia, and other conditions.

In addition, zinc has also been studied as a treatment for [herpes](#), [high cholesterol](#), [rheumatoid arthritis](#), [HIV](#), and more. However, the evidence of zinc's benefit for these conditions is inconclusive.

Zinc may be part of an effective treatment for age-related [macular degeneration](#), but more proof is needed.

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[Health care](#) providers may recommend zinc [supplements](#) for people who have zinc deficiencies. Strict vegetarians, alcohol abusers, and people who have a poor diet



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are at higher risk for zinc deficiency. So are those with certain digestive problems, such as [Crohn's disease](#).

### How much zinc should you take?

The recommended dietary allowance (RDA) includes the zinc you get from both the food you eat and any [supplements](#) you take.

Category	Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) of Zinc
<b>CHILDREN</b>	
7 months to 3 years	3 mg/day
4-8 years	5 mg/day
9-13 years	8 mg/day
<b>FEMALES</b>	
14-18 years	9 mg/day
19 years and up	8 mg/day
<a href="#">Pregnant</a>	<i>14-18 years: 12 mg/day 19 years and over: 11 mg/day</i>
<a href="#">Breastfeeding</a>	<i>14-18 years: 13 mg/day 19 years and over: 12 mg/day</i>
<b>MALES</b>	
14 years and up	11 mg/day

The tolerable upper intake level (UL) of a supplement is the highest amount that most people can take safely. Never take more unless your [health care](#) provider says so. Keep in mind that this upper limit includes

## TOOLS & RESOURCES

[How Zinc Helps: the Basics](#)

[Do You Need Vitamin K Supplements?](#)

[Is Garcinia Cambogia Safe for Weight Loss?](#)

[The Best Supplements for Healthy Digestion](#)

[How to Get the Protective Power of Vitamin K](#)

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the zinc you get from foods and supplements.

Category (Children & Adults)	Tolerable Upper Intake Level (UL) of Zinc
0-6 months	4 mg/day
7-12 months	5 mg/day
1-3 years	7 mg/day
4-8 years	12 mg/day
9-13 years	23 mg/day
14-18 years	34 mg/day
19 years and up	40 mg/day

To avoid irritating the [stomach](#), take zinc with food. For the [common cold](#), zinc lozenges are typically taken every one to two hours within 48 hours of the start of symptoms. Then, take the zinc lozenges every one to two hours while awake until the symptoms go away. There are zinc supplements in pill and liquid form.

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