

Ask Leyla: Are whole foods or yeast-based vitamins safe for everyone?

written by Leyla Muedin MS, RD, CDN | November 14, 2020



Q: Can you offer your opinion on whole food multivitamins that seem to have a yeast basis? Is the yeast base questionable even for someone without a yeast allergy or a propensity to yeast infections or would you advise against these types of multivitamin supplements for anyone?

A: Back in the day, many vitamins, especially the B complex vitamins were made from “nutritional yeast.” I still hear of people using nutritional yeast to this day—in their smoothies, for instance—and they swear by it (or old habits die hard, I guess). Because yeast flakes have a slightly “cheesy” flavor, it’s often used—especially by vegans—as a flavoring for popcorn, among other foods.

While I have nothing against taking supplements that have been working well for someone, I do like to assess if there may be any adverse reaction(s), or exacerbations of any symptoms. For example, if the person has dysbiosis of the gut or SIBO I would advise against the use of yeast-based supplements.

I would especially advise against these supplements for the person with candida overgrowth (a form of dysbiosis), or someone prone to yeast infections or skin rashes like eczema.

I’m not a fan of using whole food-based supplements because even yeast-free food-based vitamins, which seem virtuous and thus have become increasingly popular in recent years, come with a caveat. They may trigger food allergies in susceptible individuals. You wouldn’t want to take a supplement containing certain fruits like cherries or strawberries (or its extracted constituents or isolates) if you’re allergic to them. Therein lies the problem for many people with regard to whole food-based supplements.

As you can see, just like with dieting, it’s a case of no one supplement protocol fits all.

To your health!

