

Macronutrients vs. Micronutrients: Why You Need Them in Your Diet

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Giddy up, weight loss. By now, you've been [hitting it hard at the gym](http://www.cheatsheet.com/life/5-easy-exercises-to-build-bigger-biceps.html/?a=viewall) (<http://www.cheatsheet.com/life/5-easy-exercises-to-build-bigger-biceps.html/?a=viewall>), avoiding fast food dieting landmines, and probably focusing on slipping more protein into your diet to fill you up and build lean muscle. What you probably *haven't* been thinking about? Micronutrients. And while it's common to zoom in on whole grain carbs, "healthy" fats (like olive oil or nuts), and lean protein when aboard the weight loss bandwagon, not as many think about micronutrients. We turned to [The Micronutrient Miracle](http://www.amazon.com/The-Micronutrient-Miracle-Increase-Reverse/dp/1623365325) (<http://www.amazon.com/The-Micronutrient-Miracle-Increase-Reverse/dp/1623365325>): *The 28-Day Plan to Lose Weight, Increase Your Energy, and Reverse Disease*, by Jayson Calton, PhD and Mira Calton, CN, to find out just what exactly this buzzy health term was all about.

"In our new book, [The Micronutrient Miracle](http://www.amazon.com/The-Micronutrient-Miracle-Increase-Reverse/dp/1623365325) (<http://www.amazon.com/The-Micronutrient-Miracle-Increase-Reverse/dp/1623365325>), we explain how most people are familiar with macronutrients — such as carbohydrates, fats, and proteins — which your body uses as energy in the form of calories. They are required in macro, or much larger, quantities. Their ratios are usually manipulated when forming a dietary philosophy (low-carb, low-fat, 40/30/30)," explain the authors.

And yes, there's no denying your body needs macronutrients to function and thrive. Among countless other features, carbohydrates flood your cells with energy; protein fuels growth and helps with tissue repair; fat gives your organs cushioning and allows your body to absorb so-called "fat-soluble" vitamins A,D,E and K. "However, science is now determining that there are other things delivered by your food that do more to determine your overall health. These micronutrients, a term which may sound at first sound complicated, is really just an all-encompassing term for things you are already familiar with — vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids, and amino acids." Jayson and Mira explain.



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So why exactly do you need both? “Basically, you can think of macronutrients as providing the energy and building materials and micronutrients as completely different components in that same food that provide the ‘workers’ to make the body function,” Jayson and Mira say. From bone-building calcium to the antioxidant quercetin, your body craves micronutrients from fresh, whole foods sources to foster growth and keep your [metabolism \(http://www.cheatsheet.com/life/top-10-foods-to-boost-your-metabolism.html/?a=viewall\)](http://www.cheatsheet.com/life/top-10-foods-to-boost-your-metabolism.html/?a=viewall) healthy. “According to the US statistics, 90% of Americans have insufficient amounts of essential micronutrients,” warn Jayson and Mira.

We think we’d rather be in the minority on that one: “When the body becomes slightly depleted of any of the essential micronutrients, it cannot perform tasks such as proper sleep, or adequate energy. However, when the body is depleted of these micronutrients over a longer period of time it can open the door to diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer. So while your McDonalds Bacon Clubhouse burger delivers whopping 740 calories to deliver you energy, it falls short at delivering any real micronutrients to help your body function optimally,” offer Jayson and Mira.

Bottom line: When it comes to weight loss, nutrition, and your overall health, don’t underestimate the importance of these micro-powerhouses.