

# The Nutritional Downside of Drugs

## Common drugs can rob your body of nutrients

**M**any medications deplete essential nutrients from your body or interfere with their absorption, causing significant health problems. Symptoms rarely develop right away, making it harder to link the side effect with the drug. And few health professionals know that drugs deplete nutrients, which means your doctor is more likely to prescribe more drugs to treat the side effects than to help restore the nutrients, says James LaValle, a pharmacist who co-authored *The Nutritional Cost of Prescription Drugs* (Morton, 2004). Fortunately, replenishing nutrients can often reduce symptoms.

Medication	Nutrients Affected	Supplement Solution
<b>ANTIBIOTICS</b> (such as penicillin or amoxicillin)	Good bacteria, such as some bifidobacteria and acidophilus. Upsetting the gut bacteria blocks nutrient absorption and causes digestive problems.	If on antibiotics, I advise also taking a probiotic supplement ( <i>Lactobacillus GG</i> or <i>Bacillus coagulans</i> ) with meals and for a few days afterward.
<b>STATINS</b> (cholesterol-lowering drugs, such as Lipitor) or red rice yeast	CoQ10. This antioxidant helps cells use oxygen efficiently and blood vessels function. Deficiency causes fatigue and achy joints and muscles.	I have long advised people taking statins or red rice yeast to supplement with 60 to 90 mg daily of the softgel form of CoQ10.
<b>ANTI-HYPERTENSIVES</b> (diuretics, such as hydrochlorothiazide)	Potassium, magnesium, zinc, and CoQ10. Potassium and magnesium maintain healthy muscles and blood pressure. Zinc can help strengthen immunity. See CoQ10, above.	LaValle suggests eating potassium-rich foods and taking 600 mg of magnesium, 25 to 50 mg of zinc, and 60 to 90 mg of the softgel form of CoQ10 daily.
<b>ANTI-DIABETES</b> (such as Metformin)	B-6, B-12, and folic acid. B vitamins support your nervous system, adrenal function, and metabolism. Shortages may raise risk of kidney and heart disease and dementia.	Take a daily multivitamin or B-50 B-complex supplement with 400 mcg of folic acid.
<b>ANTI-DEPRESSANTS</b> (SSRIs, such as Prozac)	Several B vitamins. These vitamins boost serotonin, protecting against depression. Folic acid may help antidepressants work.	Take a daily multivitamin or B-50 B-complex supplement with 400 mcg of folic acid.