

# Vitamin A foods enhance your immunity

The A vitamin is a fat-soluble vitamin that naturally exists in many foods. Liver, and other organ meats, fish, dairy products, sweet potato and eggs, vegetables like kale and spinach, broccoli, carrots and squash and mangoes are good sources of Vitamin A. also helps the heart, lungs, kidneys, and other organs work properly.

Inadequate intake of vitamin A may lead to deficiency which can cause visual impairment and increase the risk of illness and death from childhood infections, including measles and diarrhoea.

Dr John Mukisa, a medical officer at Mulago hospital, warns that the most common symptom of vitamin A deficiency is the inability to see in low light, night or colour blindness, swelling

in the eyes, dry eye syndrome, abnormal tolerance of light and complete blindness if not treated.

**Immunity.** World over, infants suffer vitamin A deficiency most of which are in Africa. WHO therefore recommends a bi-annual vitamin A supplementation for infants between six to 59 months to reduce morbidity and mortality caused by vitamin A deficiency among children.

Dr Mukisa says, "The Vitamin helps to shorten or reduce complications of diseases such as malaria, HIV, measles and diarrhea in children by strengthening the immune system. The Vitamin

is essential in regulating the immune system by helping in the formation of white blood cells which fight off infections."

**Skin.** Vitamin A helps form and maintains a healthy skin, teeth, skeletal and soft tissue, mucus membranes, and skin. Vitamin A is also used for skin conditions including acne, eczema, psoriasis, cold sores, wounds, burns and sunburn. Vitamin A is applied to the skin to improve wound healing, reduce wrinkles and protects the skin from Ultra Violet radiations from the sun.



Mukisa says, "Vitamin A helps in skin repair and rejuvenation of the body and an increase in the levels of vitamin A result in the reduction in acne and other skin problems."

**Sight.** Vitamin A is required for good vision as it promotes good vision, especially in low light. A deficiency of the vitamin can lead to sight problems. It is also known as retinol because it produces the pigments in the retina of the eye. This is combined with opsin to produce a light-absorbing molecule needed for color vision and seeing in dim light. Dr Mukisa says, "Age-related macular degeneration is one of the most common causes of vision loss in older people which can be counteracted with daily intake of vitamin A."