

## Fortified foods for combat with malnutrition

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Reaching current intake recommendations is unfortunately unattainable everywhere since it requires universal access to adequate food and appropriate dietary habits. The addition of nutrients to foods provides an efficient tool to improve actual micronutrient intake by providing key nutrients through foods that replace traditional products. From this standpoint, food fortification has the dual gain of being able to deliver nutrients to large population without requiring drastic changes in food consumption patterns. Food fortification refers to the addition of micronutrients to processed foods while food supplementation is the term used to describe the provision of relatively large doses of micronutrients, usually in the form of pills, capsules or syrups. It has the advantage of being capable of supplying an optimal amount of a specific nutrient, in a highly absorbable form, and is often the fastest way to control deficiency in individuals or population groups that have been identified as being deficient. However, an obvious requirement is that the fortified food needs to be consumed in adequate amounts by a large proportion of the target individuals in a population. The success of a fortification program depends, in part, on the selection of the right food vehicle. Some foods that are suitable for fortification are infant foods, processed fruit juices and processed milks. Since the benefits are potentially large, food fortification can be a very cost-effective public health intervention.

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