# Rethinking health: the limits of dietary supplements



Dr Federica Amati, chief nutrition scientist at Zoe Health, has raised concerns regarding the reliance on dietary supplements for health improvement among UK adults. Speaking on Davina McCall's Begin Again podcast, Dr Amati highlighted a prevalent issue, indicating that many individuals opt for supplements as a quick fix rather than making necessary dietary and lifestyle changes.

Dr Amati remarked, "Taking a supplement is easier than changing your diet ... people take supplements and then they think 'okay, I've done my bit'." This sentiment underscores her observation that individuals often continue with unhealthy habits such as poor diet, high alcohol consumption, inadequate sleep, and a lack of physical activity. She emphasised that the impact of supplements on overall health is minimal when compared to comprehensive lifestyle changes, stating, "That supplement, in the grand scheme of things, is going to have a very marginal effect on your health."

This commentary comes amid recent statistics which show that about half of adults in the UK regularly take supplements. Dr Amati strongly advocates for obtaining essential nutrients through food sources instead. She particularly referenced a longstanding clinical trial focused on omega-3 supplementation, which aimed to determine whether it provides the expected health benefits, including reductions in cancer risk, heart disease, and mortality. Dr Amati concluded that, "It doesn't do it. It doesn't do it in the same way that eating fish does."

Her insights suggest a need for a broader understanding of nutrition, focusing on natural food sources rather than an over-reliance on supplements. The conversation highlights an ongoing debate in public health regarding the effectiveness of dietary supplements versus a balanced diet.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://zoe.com/learn/federica-amati> - This URL supports Dr. Federica Amati's role as a chief nutrition scientist at ZOE Health and her expertise in nutrition science. It highlights her background and contributions to nutritional discussions.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zI0ptL9-wBE> - This YouTube video features Dr. Federica Amati discussing the effectiveness of supplements, specifically vitamin D, which aligns with her concerns about relying on supplements for health improvement.
* <https://zoe.com/learn/daily30-and-what-it-contains> - This article introduces ZOE's Daily30+ supplement, which Dr. Amati was involved in developing. It emphasizes the importance of whole foods in nutrition, supporting her advocacy for obtaining nutrients through natural sources.
* <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31733345/> - This study on vitamin D and omega-3 trials provides evidence that supplements may not offer the same health benefits as whole foods, supporting Dr. Amati's stance on the effectiveness of supplements.
* <https://www.bmj.com/content/362/bmj.k3225> - This study assesses genetic and clinical determinants of fracture risk, which relates to the broader discussion on the impact of supplements versus diet on health outcomes.
* <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00198-016-3754-9> - This article explores the association between vitamin D status and musculoskeletal outcomes, contributing to the ongoing debate about the effectiveness of supplements in achieving health benefits.