

Optimizing Copper and Zinc Levels

Copper recommended daily intake and safe upper limits

POPULATION	AMOUNT (mcg)
Infants (0–6 months)	200
Children (6 months–14 years old)	220–890, depending on age
Adolescents (14–18 years old)	890
Adults	900
Pregnant women	1,000
Breastfeeding women	1,300

Upper limit: Currently set at 10 mg/day, but data from carefully performed animal studies suggests an upper limit of closer to 50 mg/day is more reasonable.

Zinc recommended daily intake

POPULATION	AMOUNT (mg/day)
Infants (0–6 months)	2
Children (7–12 months)	3
Children (1–3 years)	5
Children (4–8 years)	5
Children (9–13 years)	8
Adolescents (14–18 years)	8 (girls); 11 (boys)

POPULATION	AMOUNT (mg/day)
Adult men	11
Adult women	8
Pregnant women	12
Breastfeeding women	13

Safe upper limit: 40 mg/day

Top Dietary Sources of Copper

FOOD	AMOUNT (mg per 200kcal)
Clam	39
Beef/Lamb/Goose Liver	14–17
Oysters	13
Fresh Basil	3
King Crab	2
Sesame Butter	1
Ham	1
Cashews	1
Octopus	1
Chestnuts	1
Chicken Liver	1

FOOD	AMOUNT (mg per 200kcal)
Whitefish	1

Top Dietary Sources of Zinc

POPULATION	AMOUNT (mg per 200kcal)
Oysters	265
Veal Liver	17
King Crab	16
Lobster	10
Beef, Chuck	10
Lamb, Shank	10
Endive	9
Beef, Brisket	9
Mushrooms, Crimini	8
Broccoli Rabe	7
Bison, Ground	6

Who should supplement?

- Vegetarians, vegans, and those who can't eat copper- or zinc-rich foods
- People with significant copper or zinc deficiency
- People with GI absorption issues

Copper Supplementation

POPULATION	AMOUNT (mg)
Low background intake	6–8 mg/d
Moderate background intake	2–4 mg/d
Maintenance dose	1–2 mg/d

Zinc Supplementation

POPULATION	AMOUNT (mg)
Low background intake ¹	Up to 30 mg/d
Moderate background intake ²	Up to 15 mg/d
Maintenance dose ³	10–15 mg/d

¹ usually vegetarians/vegans

² omnivores

³ for vegetarians/vegans

Best supplement form is zinc glycinate – good absorption and minimal GI side effects.