

EN
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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(14.11.2025)

Scientific bodies like the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the World Health Organization identified essential micronutrients which include a range of vitamins and minerals¹, but not lithium. Studies suggest that abnormal lithium metabolism might play a role in neurodegenerative diseases, and lithium containing drugs are being tested for treating Alzheimer's disease. However, to Commission's current knowledge, there is no proof that lithium from the diet is crucial for cognitive function, that low intake affects it negatively, or that deficiency symptoms can be reversed by dietary lithium; the key factors for a nutrient to be considered essential. The Commission will consult with EFSA whether further examination of the potential essentiality of lithium, based on the information in the article referred to by the Honourable Member would warrant an EFSA opinion.

Annexes I and II to Directive 2002/46/EC² on food supplements establish lists of vitamins and minerals and the forms that may be used for the manufacture of food supplements. Chemical substances used as nutrient sources in food supplements should be safe and bioavailable to the body and only nutrients normally consumed as part of the diet should be allowed in food supplements, although this does not mean that their presence therein is necessary. Both annexes may be revised by the Commission following an opinion of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed upon request by an interested party, and provided that the substance has been positively evaluated for its safety and bioavailability by EFSA.

The Commission also recalls that a substance that is novel pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2015/2283³ must obtain an authorisation before being placed on the Union market.

¹ Such as Vitamin A, Vitamin B1 (Thiamine), Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin), Vitamin B3 (Niacin), Vitamin B5 (Pantothenic acid), Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine), Vitamin B7 (Biotin), Vitamin B9 (Folate/Folic acid), Vitamin B12 (Cobalamin), Vitamin C, Vitamin D, Vitamin E, Vitamin K, Calcium, Chloride, Copper, Iodine, Iron, Magnesium, Manganese, Molybdenum, Phosphorus, Potassium, Selenium, Sodium, Zinc.

² Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 June 2002 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to food supplements, (OJ L 183, 12.7.2002, p. 51).

³ Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2015 on novel foods, amending Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Regulation (EC) No 258/97 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1852/2001, (OJ L 327, 11.12.2015, p. 1).