

Position Statement

Summary of Position

Title	The Prescribing of Vitamin and Mineral Supplements in Health and Social Care (HSC) in Northern Ireland
Headline Position	HSC does not support the routine prescribing of vitamin and mineral supplements in Northern Ireland.
Scope	Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland (HSC)
Date / Review	July 2026 / July 2029

The Prescribing of Vitamin Supplements in HSC in Northern Ireland

1. Headline Position

HSC does not support the routine prescribing of vitamin and mineral supplements in Northern Ireland.

2. Rationale

With the exception of iron-deficiency anaemia, primary vitamin or mineral deficiency due to diet insufficiency is rare in the developed world¹. Vitamins and minerals are essential nutrients that should be obtained from eating a healthy, varied diet.²

NICE clinical guideline on nutrition support in adults³ states, if there is concern about the adequacy of micronutrient (vitamin and mineral) intake, a complete oral multivitamin and mineral supplement providing the reference nutrient intake for all vitamins and trace elements should be considered by healthcare professionals with the relevant skills and training in nutrition support who are able to determine the nutritional adequacy of a patient's dietary intake. This should be stopped when adequate dietary intake from normal food is reestablished.

There are limited indications for prescribing of these supplements, and should be in line with ACBS indication i.e. for treatment of potential or actual deficiency. They should not be prescribed as a general “pick-me-up”, for wound healing or as a dietary supplement.

3. Recommendations for Clinicians

- Vitamin and mineral supplements should only be prescribed for potential or actual deficiency (ACBS indication).
- Recommendations from secondary care should direct patients to purchase over the counter (OTC) unless there is an actual or potential deficiency (ACBS indication).
- Review and stop prescribing all vitamin or multivitamin & mineral supplements in **adults**, unless clinically indicated for potential or actual deficiency (ACBS indication).
- Patients requesting a vitamin / vitamin & mineral supplement without clinical indication can be directed to their community pharmacy for advice on appropriate OTC products.

4. Guidance for Patients/Carers

Vitamins and minerals should be obtained from a healthy, varied diet. They are readily available from food sources including meat, fish, eggs, wholegrains, nuts & seeds, plant oils (e.g. vegetable oil), fruit and vegetables.⁴ A detailed list of foods can be found on. Resources available for patients include: [NHS Vitamins and Minerals](#), [Enjoy Healthy Eating guide](#) and [Public Health Agency Eatwell Guide](#).

5. References

1. [Vitamins | Treatment summaries | BNFC | NICE](#)
2. [PrescQIPP bulletin 296i: Vitamins and Minerals](#)
3. [NICE Nutrition support for adults: oral nutrition support, enteral tube feeding and parenteral nutrition](#)
4. [NHS Vitamins and Minerals](#)