

# Supplements



20s



30s



40s

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# you need NOW



An age-by-age guide to the vitamins, minerals, herbs, and antioxidants that can help you live better.

**Not so long ago**, most of us rarely wondered whether or not to take nutritional supplements. Maybe you'd take a multivitamin when you were too busy to eat right, or pop some vitamin C if you felt a cold coming on. But there just weren't all that many supplements to choose from. And—health nuts aside—most of us doubted the effectiveness of nutrients delivered in pill form. Besides, taking pills detracted from the real message outlined by nutritionists, which was to eat a well-balanced diet. | **These days**, as studies continue to confirm the crucial role nutrition plays in health, supplements have taken on a more significant role. In fact, many experts now view them as a necessary, even superior, way to get certain nutrients. "There are just too many vitamins and minerals we don't get enough of otherwise," says Jeffrey Blumberg, professor of nutrition at Tufts University. | **So what are those important nutrients?** And when does it make sense to rely on supplements to get them? We asked people who have made a career out of studying supplements to weigh in (see "Meet the Experts," page 98). Everyone we spoke with agreed that the importance of taking a multivitamin is now pretty much a given; it's simply the most reliable way to cover basic nutritional needs. But many are now also recommending a daily dose of omega-3 fatty acids, those anti-inflammatory superstars that can help prevent and treat a host of health problems. | **Along with those two basics**, we've also listed supplements our experts consider **optional**. These are the ones that can help buffer the effects of stress, ease the discomfort of menopause, sharpen memory—in short, they can optimize health and wellness overall. | **Given that there's a pill** for just about every ailment, it's easy to get carried away. To help you narrow the field, our experts looked at nutritional needs by age. Not only do our health concerns

change over time—we want to boost fertility in our 30s, say, and libido in our 50s—but we become less efficient at making use of the nutrients we get in food. | **What our guide doesn't do** is try to anticipate every medical condition you might develop, and the specific supplements that could help; for that, you'll need to consult a practitioner. We're also not saying you *have* to take supplements to live a healthy life. We're simply suggesting ways to weather some of the particular challenges of your age, whether you're fresh out of college or entering retirement.

## For all ages

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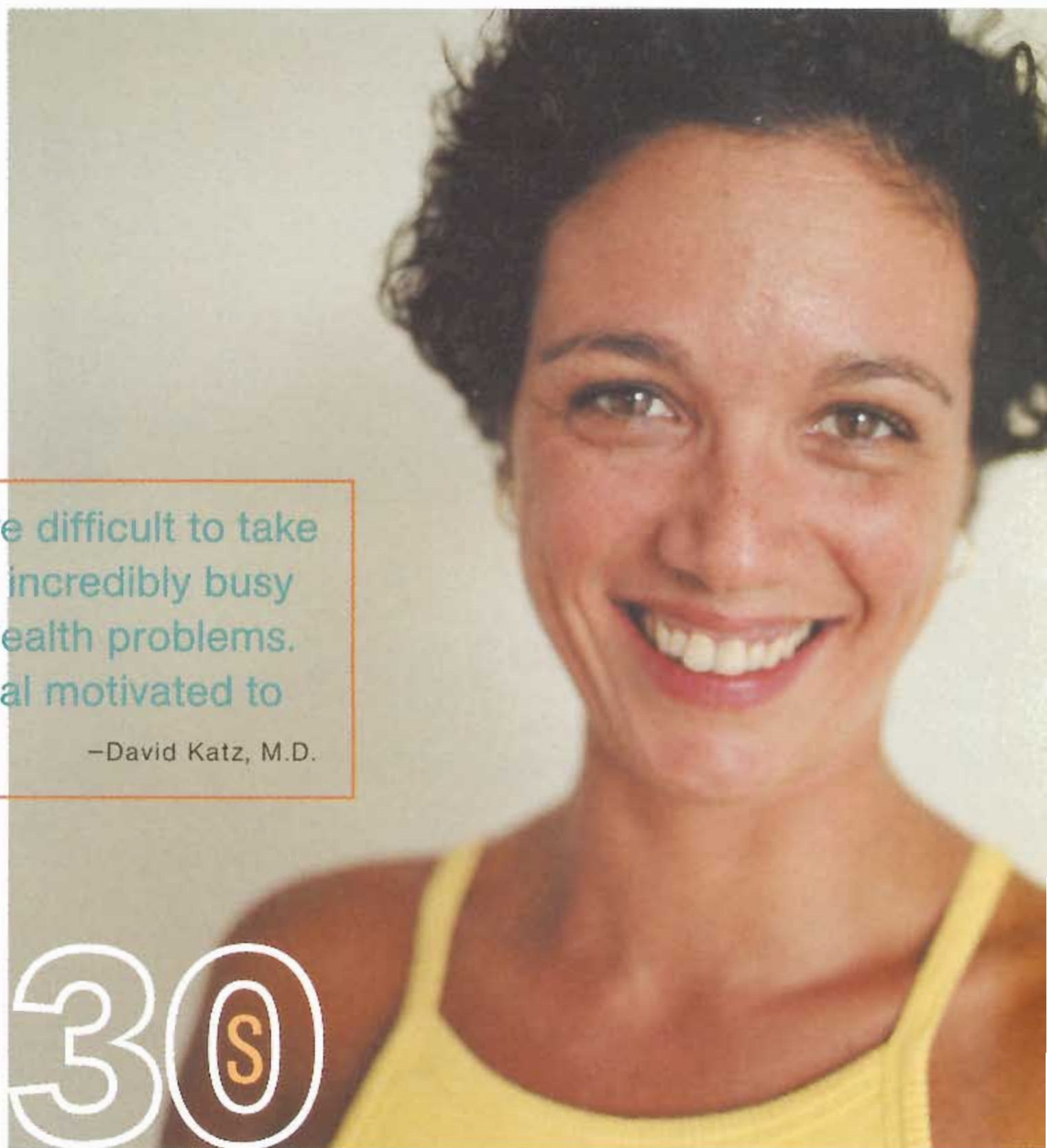


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**Men and women in their thirties** are typically immersed in building their careers and home lives, and they may be parents as well. This is a particularly busy time in life, and exercise and other forms of self-care can get short shrift. "When people's activity level goes down they tend to eat less healthy food," says David Katz, director of the Prevention Research Center at Yale. "And the importance of supplements increases when you're eating fewer nutrients." | Those who haven't had children yet may well be trying, so reproductive concerns are big. Women can benefit from taking folic acid, and omega-3s too. "Studies show that babies of women who took omega-3s (or consumed lots of fish) have fewer allergies and instances of ADHD, autism, and other brain chemistry imbalances," says Katz.

"People in their thirties are difficult to take care of because they are incredibly busy and aren't having many health problems. This means they aren't real motivated to stick with a regimen."

—David Katz, M.D.



## ■ For men

**Multivitamin** with zinc. Zinc deficiencies have been linked to low sperm count.

**Omega-3 fatty acids** (1 g twice a day)

**OPTIONAL:**

**Antioxidants** Vitamins E (400 IU) and C (250 mg) (see "The 20s").

**Calcium** with **vitamin D** (1,000 mg of calcium with 400 IU of vitamin D, in 2 doses) to prevent bone loss.

**An energy booster** such as ginseng (100-200 mg standardized extract). "I call it the burnout remedy," says Low Dog. Take in the morning for about 6 to 8 weeks to see results. Low Dog likes a type called Ginsana.

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## ■ For women

**Multivitamin** with iron and folic acid.

**Calcium** with **vitamin D** (1,000 mg of calcium with 400 IU of vitamin D in 2 doses) to build bones (see "The 20s").

**Omega-3 fatty acids** (1 g twice a day)

**OPTIONAL:**

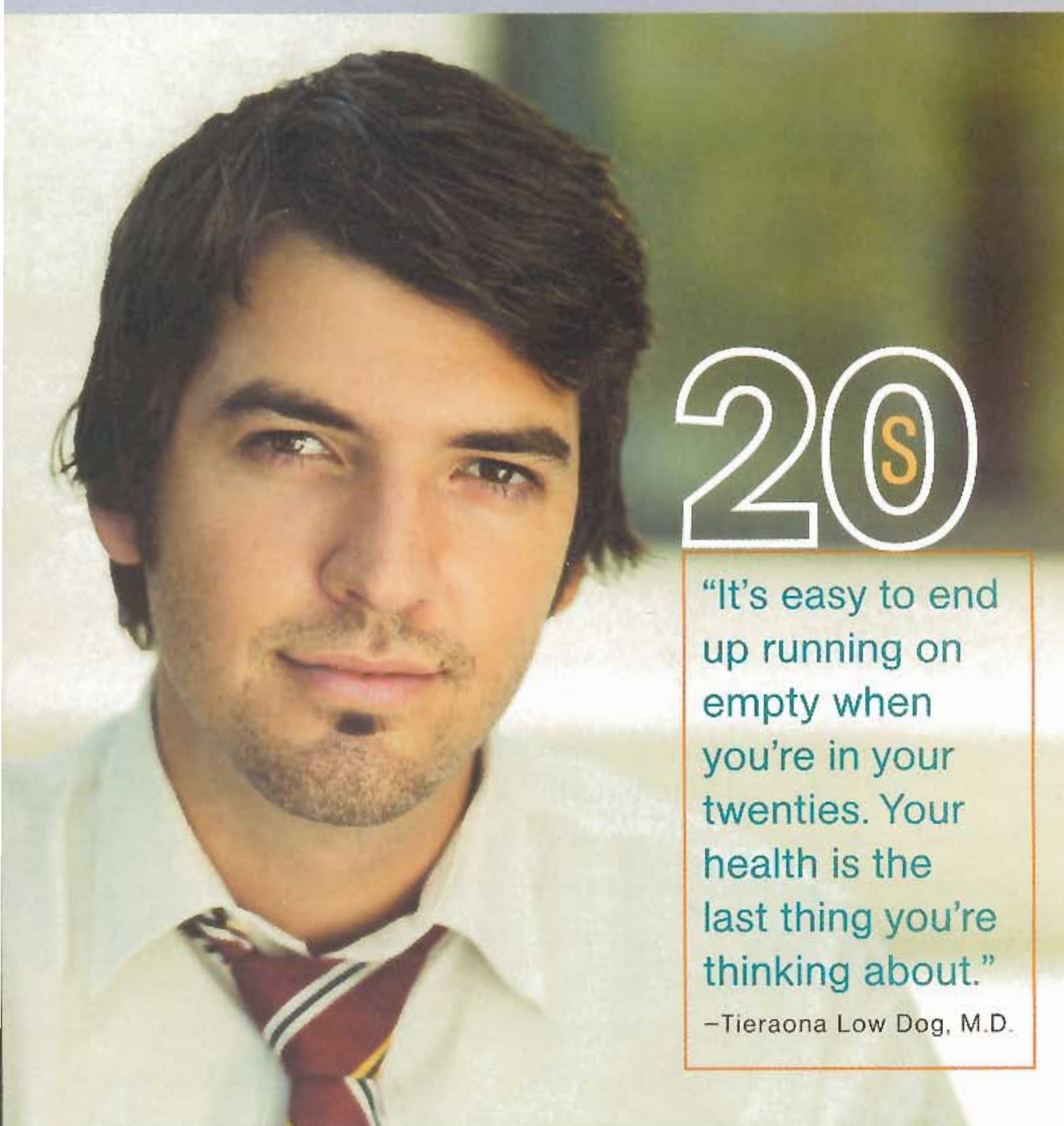
**Antioxidants** Vitamins E (400 IU)

and C (250 mg) (see "The 20s").

**Chaste tree berry** (150-500 mg of standardized extract). Regulates a woman's cycle and boosts fertility (see "The 20s").

**An energy booster** such as *Rhodiola rosea* (300-400 mg, in two doses). Also called golden root, this herb helps the body adapt to stress. A recommended brand is Rosavin, by Ameriden.





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"It's easy to end up running on empty when you're in your twenties. Your health is the last thing you're thinking about."

—Tieraona Low Dog, M.D.

**What do we do when we're in our twenties?** We work hard, play hard, and stay out late. And we're way too busy to stay home with a cold. So immune function is a big concern for folks this age. If you're burning the candle at both ends, take a multivitamin that contains vitamins B, C, and E, which you may be running short on. And if you're a man interested in becoming a father, make sure it contains zinc, which can play a critical role in fertility. This is also the time to focus on prevention, like taking calcium to keep bones strong later on.

## ■ For men

**Multivitamin** Get a pill that includes 15 milligrams of zinc, which promotes healthy sperm production, and a range of B vitamins, which are important for converting food to energy.

**Omega-3 fatty acids** (1 gram twice a day)

### OPTIONAL:

**Antioxidants** By fighting free radicals, antioxidants can play a big role in keeping us healthy. Take vitamins E (400 IU) and C (250 mg) on top of what's in a multi; the RDA is only enough to stave off deficiencies.

**Ashwagandha** (1,000 to 1,500 mg twice a day). Don't take this Indian

herb every day—only when you're feeling particularly stressed out. "I recommend it when someone comes to see me and complains of being overwhelmed by life," says Tieraona Low Dog, an herbalist and physician at the University of Arizona School of Medicine in Tucson.

## ■ For women

**Multivitamin** with iron and folic acid. Premenopausal women should get at least the RDA for iron to replace what's lost every month. Make sure it also contains 400 mcg of folic acid, which prevents neural tube defects and aids fetal brain development when taken in the first six weeks of pregnancy.

**Calcium** with **vitamin D** (1,000 mg of calcium with 400 IU of vitamin D, divided into 2 doses). The combination can even out mood swings, ease bloating, and build strong bones.

**Omega-3 fatty acids** (1 g twice a day)

### OPTIONAL:

**Antioxidants** Take 400 IU of vitamin E and 250 mg of vitamin C above the amount in a multi. Another option: a mixed flavonoid supplement.

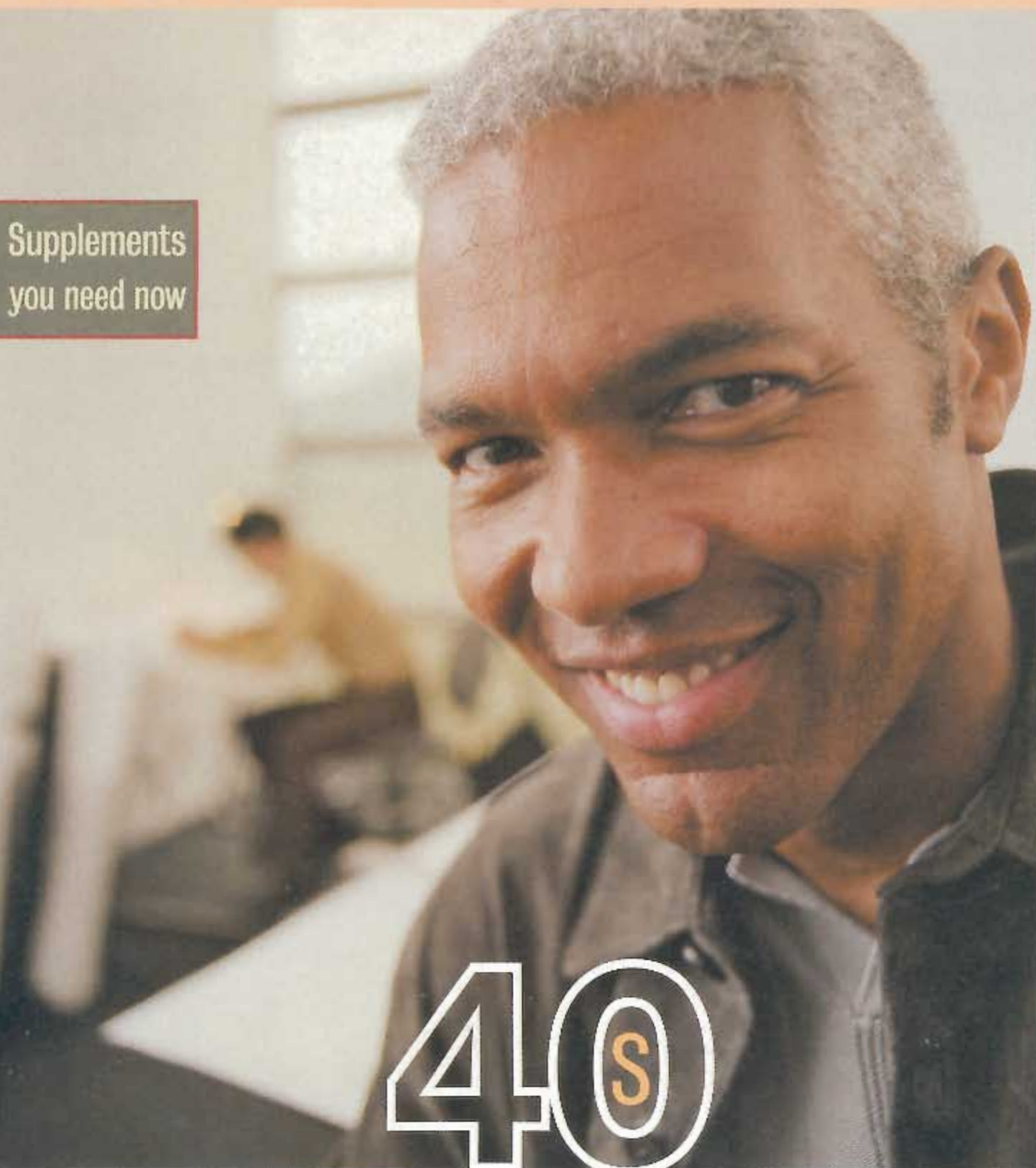
**Chaste tree berry** (150-500 mg standardized extract, or 500-1,000 mg crude herb). "It's good for PMS and smoothing out mood and menstrual cycles," says Low Dog.

**B-6** Multis contain B vitamins, but to help manage stress and PMS, you'll want to take more than the RDA of this one. Aim for 25-50 mg.

**Ashwagandha** (1,000 to 1,500 mg twice a day when you're feeling stressed). Soothes nerves and boosts resiliency; ideal for fighting PMS-related anxiety and moodiness.



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**What's middle age if not the beginning of your sense of physical limitations?**

For most of us, the forties is the decade when we start realizing that no, we really can't do it all. At least not on five hours of sleep a night. Fatigue, low energy, and sleep problems begin to take their toll. For women, perimenopause gets underway and with it can come a host of issues, from mood swings to intensified symptoms of PMS. | The concept of prevention takes on new urgency as conditions such as high blood pressure and cholesterol increase the risk of cardiac disease, and other potential problems such as breast cancer and prostate trouble loom. Now's the time to take a family history—if you haven't already done so—to see what you might be at risk for. "As soon as you experience problems, it's wise to get on top of them right away," says Katz. For example, if you've got aching joints, which suggests the onset of arthritis, you might want to start taking glucosamine.

"In this decade, gender-specific problems such as prostate conditions for men and breast cancer for women loom large on the horizon. You want to be aware of risk factors, and deal with them." —David Katz, M.D.

## ■ For men

### Multivitamin

**Omega-3 fatty acids** (1 g twice a day)

### OPTIONAL:

**Antioxidants** Vitamins E (400 IU) and C (250 mg) (see "The 20s").

**Calcium with vitamin D** (1,000 mg of calcium with 400 IU of vitamin D, in 2 doses) to prevent bone loss.

**An energy booster**, such as ginseng (100-200 mg) or Rhodiola rosea (300-400 mg). They can enhance libido, as well as energy.

**For cardiac health:** CoQ10 (1 mg per 2.2 pounds of body weight).

**For joint health:** Glucosamine, chondroitin sulfate, or a combo (1,500 mg glucosamine; 800 to 1,200 mg chondroitin sulfate, in 2 doses); or SAME (400-600 mg). Both can rebuild cartilage.

## ■ For women

### Multivitamin

**Omega-3 fatty acids** (1 g twice a day)

**Calcium with vitamin D** Boost the dosage to 1,500 mg of calcium if you're postmenopausal; take at least 400 IU vitamin D.

### OPTIONAL:

**Antioxidants** Vitamins E (400 IU) and C (250 mg) (see "the 20s").

**Black cohosh** (20 to 80 mg of standardized extract twice a day). "Nothing has been found to be nearly as effective for menopause symptoms," says Low Dog. She likes Remifemin.

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