

By: ~~Qifan~~ Gitei, Science Editor

## Vitamins Shorten Your Life

*A balanced diet is the best choice*

You pump thousands of vitamin pills into your body in order to live longer but, in fact, this only brings you one step closer to the verge of the grave. This is what the results of a meta-analysis of 67 studies made on 230,000 people are telling us. The study revealed not only that vitamin C does not have an apparent positive or negative effects on warding off cold, but also that vitamins A and E, taken for improving bone strength, vision and circulation, could interfere with the body's immunity, increasing mortality. "We could find no evidence to support taking antioxidant supplements to reduce the risk of dying earlier in healthy people or patients with various diseases. The findings of our review show that, if anything, people in trial groups given the antioxidants beta-carotene, vitamin A, and vitamin E showed increased rates of mortality. There was no indication that vitamin C and selenium may have positive or negative effects" said co-author Goran Bjelakovic, from the Copenhagen University Hospital in Denmark. Antioxidants are believed to protect the body from free-radicals, molecules damaging the brain and other tissues. They include zinc and extracts of ginkgo biloba, grape seed extract and green tea. In the end, the best solution is to stop indulging in junk food and eat a healthy and varied diet, in which fruit and vegetables are not absent, while supplements should be taken only in specific circumstances, like pregnancy or breastfeeding, in the case of women. "There is a need to exercise caution in the use of high doses of purified supplements of vitamins, including antioxidant vitamins, and minerals, as their impact on long-term health may not have been fully established and they cannot be assumed to be without risk," the British Department of Health warned. However, the Health Supplements Information Service signaled that antioxidant supplements are crucial for people with a diet poor in these nutrients. "Antioxidant vitamins, like any other vitamins, were never intended for the prevention of chronic disease and mortality. They are intended for health maintenance on the basis of their various physiological roles in the body and in the case of the antioxidant vitamins, this does, in appropriate amounts, include a protective antioxidant effect in the body's tissues," said spokeswoman Pamela Mason.