

## Ask Mercedes

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by Lorraine Mercedes Picot, RNCP, ROHP, nd



**Q: Is there a difference between regular Vitamin C and Ascorbate and is it as important as Linus Pauling says in his books?** *Adrian, Westmount, Qc.*

**A: Dear Adrian;**

**Vitamin C** is actually **ascorbic acid**. Ascorbic acid's name comes from *a-* (meaning *no*) and *scorbuticus* (meaning *scurvy*). **Ascorbates** on the other hand, are mineral salts made from ascorbic acid mixed with mineral carbonates (calcium carbonate, potassium carbonate, sodium bicarbonate, magnesium carbonate, etc.). The mineral carbonates serve as buffering agents to make them gentler on the gut than pure ascorbic acid. Those buffers create **mineral ascorbates**. The suffix “-bic” in ascorbic indicates it’s an *acid*, while the “-bate” in ascorbate means it’s a *salt*.

Ascorbates are used in food preservation and popular dietary supplements known as Ester-C, buffered C or mineral ascorbates such as Calcium Ascorbate. The main advantage to taking Vitamin C in ascorbate form is that it may be better tolerated than regular ascorbic acid – it’s easier on the tummy. It’s non-acid forming (pH of 6.8-7.40) as opposed to acidic Vitamin C (ascorbic acid has a pH of 2.5). Mineral ascorbates are the form of vitamin C that is produced in the livers of animals that manufacture their own Vitamin C - unlike us primates. We humans desperately need adequate amounts from our diet or from supplements. And this is when the fun begins.

At this point, you may be eager to learn more or you may have snoozed off but before moving on to the next part of your question, I’d like to cover some of Vitamin C’s rave reviews.

Vitamin C is believed to be involved in more biochemical reactions than any other vitamin - necessary for some 300 functions in the body! This nutritional powerhouse is responsible for building, maintaining, and strengthening our tissues and immune system.

As a powerful antioxidant, ascorbic acid may help prevent and fight several types of cancers by protecting our cells from free-radical damage and limiting the production of cancerous cells.

It's said to strengthen arteries and prevent platelets from clumping together, lower total cholesterol, reduce blood pressure thereby shielding us from cardiovascular disease and stroke. Vitamin C also prevents cataracts and skin damage from UVA and UVB exposure. Recent research indicates that it even slows down the natural ageing process!

At high doses, Vitamin C binds with nasty metals like lead, mercury and cadmium to flush them out of our system. Doing this can also flush out essential minerals like calcium, magnesium, iron, copper and zinc and Ascorbates can help replenish some of these vital minerals.

I think it's important to note that in an ideal world, we would obtain most of our vitamin C requirements from fresh fruit and vegetables – make that non-processed, and organic. Even if you take a supplement, make sure your diet includes some good sources of vitamin C such as green leafy vegetables, citrus fruit, tomatoes, berries, melons, papayas, etc. Juicing these deliver even greater yields.

### **Linus Pauling, PhD**

In the early 70's, the Nobel Prize-winning biochemist Linus Pauling, who's often called the **Father of Vitamin C**, rattled the health community with his book *Vitamin C and the Common Cold*. He proposed that large doses would cut the length of the common cold in half. His further claims that Vitamin C offered a cure for heart disease, cancer and infections, were greeted with ridicule. His research indicated intakes of up to 10 grams of vitamin C daily to activate an anti-cancer response within the body. He firmly believed heart disease to be caused by a chronic vitamin C deficiency.

It shouldn't surprise anyone today that Pauling's revolutionary ideas still make headline news sixteen long years after his death. The renowned humanitarian was arguably the greatest scientist of our time. He held 48 honorary Ph.D. s and is still the only person to have twice been awarded an unshared Nobel Prize - in 1954 for Chemistry and in 1962 for Peace, when North America was in the throes of the Vietnam War and the Cuban Missile Crisis.



Linus Pauling's book publications ignited the spark of controversy over the doses, the types, and the benefits of Vitamin C that continues to this day. Regarding dosing, many studies show that the sicker a person is, the more vitamin C they can tolerate (bowel tolerance). The ideal dosage can vary tremendously from one individual to the next depending on their condition.

Because recent studies appear to confirm the link between a person's Vitamin C intake (in whatever form) and cancer risk, healthy adults, in my opinion, should be taking around 2 grams of Ascorbate daily, ideally in divided doses at mealtimes.

Pauling himself is said to have taken 18 grams of Ascorbic Acid daily adding baking soda (a base) to counter acidity. As a refresher, 1 gram equals 1,000 milligrams (mg).

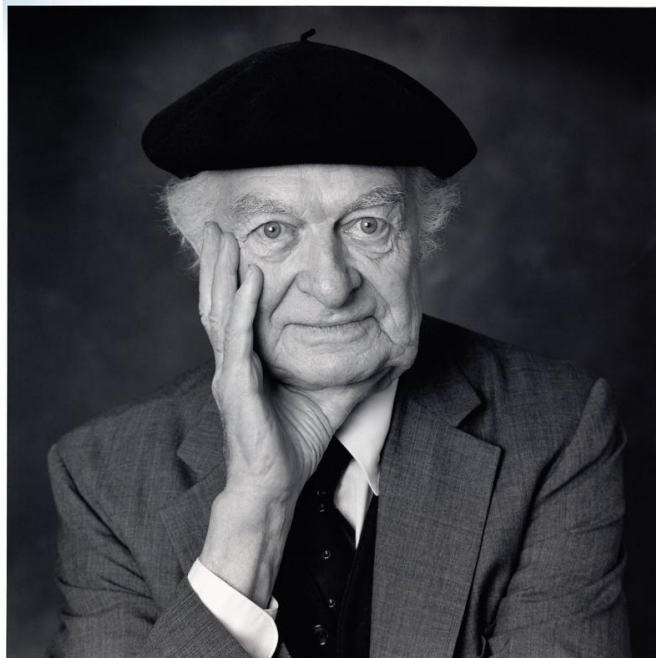
Yours in Health and Happiness,  
Mercedes

Send in your Nutrition and Wellness questions to: [andnowtoyou@gmail.com](mailto:andnowtoyou@gmail.com)

**Lorraine Mercedes Picot is a Registered Nutritional Consultant, Registered Orthomolecular Health Practitioner and Naturotherapist. Mercedes has been offering one-on-one nutritional counseling for over 20 years in Ottawa , in Victoria and she now resides in Montreal. She is passionate about her work and is committed to helping her clients reach their goals.**

**She offers consultations in either English or French and is a member of the IONC (International Organization of Nutritional Consultants) and the ANN (Academy of Naturopaths and Naturotherapists). She can be reached at 514- 439- 4685 or at this email address.**

**The advice provided in her column is for informational purposes only. Please consult with a qualified Physician for any serious health problems.**



**“The best way to a good idea is to have lots of ideas.” - *Linus Pauling***