

Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals

The UK Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals (EVM), an independent expert advisory committee, was established in 1998 to advise on safe levels of intakes of vitamins and minerals in food supplements and fortified foods. The EVM comprised experts in all relevant disciplines, including nutrition, toxicology, epidemiology and medicine and a non-specialist member to represent consumer interests. Four observers, nominated by the main interest groups (food, health food, consumers and complementary medicines) were appointed to act as a link between EVM and the main stakeholders.

The EVM considered detailed reviews of the relevant safety and intake data for 34 vitamins and minerals and carried out a risk assessment based on that evidence. A draft report was issued for comment in August 2002, following which the EVM agreed changes to take account of the new evidence submitted in response to the consultation. The EVM published its final report in May 2003 recommending safe upper levels for 8 vitamins and minerals and guidance levels for a further 22. The data were inadequate to establish safe upper levels or guidance levels for germanium, vanadium and sodium chloride. Too much sodium chloride is clearly unsafe, and is the basis for the Agency's policy on salt. For vanadium and germanium there is uncertainty about the safety.

The EVM noted that safety assessment of nutrients should take into account intakes from all sources. It therefore recommended safe upper levels or guidance levels for both total and supplementary nutrient intake, based on estimates of dietary intake of UK consumers, primarily obtained from the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) programme. The Board considered and endorsed the EVM report in May 2003. The full report is available from the Agency's web site <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/webpage/vitandmin/>