

Supplement Safety

Supplements include anything from vitamins and minerals to herbs, enzymes, drinks, and energy bars. They can come in the form of tablets, capsules, gels, powders, liquids...you name it!



Supplement Regulation

The [Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) is the agency responsible for supplement regulation, *however*, they don't get involved with a supplement until *after* it is being sold to consumers.

What does this mean? Consumers are often using supplements before they are evaluated by the FDA, whose guidelines are already less strict than those used for prescription drugs. Therefore, regulation of supplements before they hit the shelves falls into the hands of the manufacturers and distributors.

As you can see, taking supplements comes with a risk due to lack of oversight and looser regulations.

Do Your Research

First and foremost, talk to a Registered Dietitian or Doctor before taking any new supplements. Supplements, just like other medications and some foods, can interact with medications you are already taking, which can lead to potentially dangerous effects. It's also important to talk to a healthcare professional about dosage. Too much of a supplement can be very dangerous!

Research supplements on noncommercial websites for unbiased information. Be skeptical of websites that are promoting or supporting a certain product or supplement. A few places to start are:

- National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Third Party Verification and Independent Quality Assessment Seals

Although not fool-proof, picking a supplement with any of these seals will provide an “extra set of eyes” when selecting a supplement. These are independent groups that test for quality, meaning they make sure the supplement contains what is says it contains and that it doesn’t have dangerous contaminants. *Don’t mistake this seal for proving safety or effectiveness!*



ConsumerLab.com[®]

Celebrating 18 Years of Reporting 1999 - 2017

Our Mission: To identify the best quality health and nutritional products through independent testing.



Food First

Always attempt to get the vitamins, minerals, and nutrients you need from food first. In fact, food contains fiber and many other substances that supplements don’t necessarily provide that have a positive impact on our health. Eat a variety of colors of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean protein throughout the week to pack a punch of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients.

On the other hand, not all supplements are dangerous and there are times that supplements may be appropriate and beneficial. For example, it is recommended that pregnant women take folic acid supplements or that someone following a vegan diet take vitamin B12. Just remember, talk to your Dietitian or Doctor before trying a new supplement!

