

Dietary Supplements: Essential Information

There are more than 80,000 of dietary supplements on the market: tablets, capsules, powders, drinks, tinctures, and energy bars, made from different ingredients. Dietary supplements are neither drugs nor foods; they are not intended to treat, diagnose, mitigate, prevent, or cure diseases or health issues. A person can get most if not all of the nutrients from a variety of healthy foods; the supplements can't take the place of a healthy diet (FDA, 2019; NIH, 2014).

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has established good manufacturing practices (GMPs) for dietary supplements to help ensure their identity, purity, strength, and composition. Several independent organizations (U.S. Pharmacopeia, ConsumerLab.com, and NSF International) offer quality testing and allow products that pass these tests to display their seals of approval (NIH, 2014).

Always be alert to the possibility of unexpected side effects from any dietary supplements or nutritional products. If you suspect that you have had any reaction to a dietary supplement, stop taking the supplement, inform your doctor, and submit a report to the manufacturing company and FDA (NIH, 2014). Every time when you have a health concern, are pregnant, or nursing, discuss with your licensed health practitioners (medical doctor, naturopathic doctor, pharmacist, or registered dietitian) which supplements could be best for you, as well as their dosages, length of use, safety, and possible interactions with medications, foods, and other substances (NIH, 2014).

NSF International is a public health and safety organization. It monitors the quality of the supplements and their manufacturing process using their independent testing and certification process. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has an Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS). Here the consumers can find the information about the dietary supplements (vitamins, herbs, antioxidants, weight loss products, etc), their benefits, side effects, recommended doses, and potential toxicities and interactions. NIH ODS informs you about the essential information about the dietary supplements: what you have to know. On NIH ODS website, you can search specific supplements and read all pertinent information and facts about them. The updates are regularly posted. You can also find the nutrient recommendations for specific ages, genders, and life stages and understand the meaning of Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI) and Daily Values (DV). The online calculator allows you to calculate your daily nutritional needs.

If you care about the quality of foods and beverages that go into your body, then it makes sense to care about the quality, purity, safety, and necessity of the dietary supplements that you use. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions about the good quality supplements. What you put in your body is important, whether it is food, beverage, or dietary or nutritional product.

References and resources:

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