



CONSUMER Fact Sheet



Did you know . . .

Certification from NSF International helps confirm that a supplement truly contains the ingredients and quantities shown on the label without containing any unlisted ingredients or potentially harmful levels of impurities.



Seven Things You Should Know Before Buying a Supplement

If you made a resolution this New Year to get healthier, you may be considering whether to take a supplement. Before you do so, there are several things you should consider.

Understand the Purpose of Supplements

Nutritional supplements are not a replacement for poor eating habits nor can they cure disease. However, they may be able to help provide nutrients that you might not otherwise be consuming at the recommended amounts.

Get Advice on Which Supplements to Take

Not sure what supplement to take or if you need to even take a supplement? Because nutritional needs vary and some supplements can have side effects, check with your health care provider prior to taking or combining supplements, especially if you are already taking any prescription medications.

Be Skeptical About Outrageous Label Claims

Many products make claims that sound good on the surface to today's health conscious consumers. But if a product claims it will help make you thinner, smarter, stronger or faster without needing to make any other lifestyle changes, it's probably too good to be true, and some claims like all natural or pharmaceutical strength don't mean anything at all.

Understand the Risks, Especially if you're an Athlete

Supplements may not be totally risk free under all circumstances. Some can interact with over-the-counter or prescription medications, while others may contain active ingredients that could cause an adverse reaction in some users.

Amateur and professional athletes especially need to consider what's at stake when using supplements, as some non-certified supplements may contain a banned

substance that could potentially disqualify them from competition.

Don't Confuse GMP and Product Certifications

Not all certifications apply to products themselves. For example, GMP registrations are a type of facility certification that confirms a manufacturer is observing good manufacturing practices established for their industry. However, no product testing is conducted during a GMP audit to confirm product content or labeling accuracy.

Follow Serving Size Instructions

Too much of a single nutrient can have adverse health effects. To avoid potential health issues, read and follow serving size instructions indicated on the product label. If you take multiple supplements, check to see if any of the products contain the same ingredient — if they do, make sure that you're not exceeding the maximum daily recommended level for any single nutrient by taking both products.

Don't Ignore Expiration Dates

If your supplement has an expiration date on the label, don't ignore it, as these dates are posted for a reason. Supplements can lose potency over time, so don't purchase supplements with expiration dates close to the date of purchase, and if you have any supplements at home that are past the expiration date, throw them out.

While dietary supplements can play an important role in overall health, they are not a quick fix or a replacement for a healthy lifestyle. Do your research and talk with a trusted health care provider before heading to the store. There's no substitute for becoming an educated consumer before purchasing your next supplement.