

Dietary Supplements

Most Americans regularly take one or more dietary supplements. In fact, we spend over \$30 Billion annually on these products—many of them untested and unproven, and some unsafe! The following tips will help you to make informed decisions about your supplement use:

Is it safe? Is it effective?

Supplements are not tested for safety or effectiveness before being sold. 'Natural' does not mean safe. Do your research before taking any dietary supplement.

Check your source

Government (.gov) or educational institutions (.edu) are usually great sources of unbiased information. Someone who is selling a product or receives money (advertising or other) from a supplement company is not a good source.

Beware of bargain shopping, consider quality/purity

A few 3rd party companies help to certify that products meet purity standards: USP, Consumer Lab, NSF. Bargain supplements can be a gamble—you may be getting less (or MORE!) than you think you are.

Speak with an unbiased health care professional

Depending on the product you're interested in you may want to talk with your doctor, pharmacist, or a registered dietitian. Many supplements can have adverse effects or negative interactions with other drugs or supplements you might be taking.

For links to good web resources:

http://bit.ly/supplements_kw

Questions on this content? Find your area educator:

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