

OPERATION SUPPLEMENT SAFETY

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HUMAN PERFORMANCE RESEARCH CENTER

DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS:

RED FLAGS—WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Despite growing popularity among military personnel, many dietary supplements on the market are tainted and unsafe.

If you are currently using or considering using a dietary supplement, ask yourself these red flag questions to minimize your risk of consuming harmful products.

- Is it a high-risk dietary supplement? High-risk product categories include:
 - Bodybuilding products
 - Weight-loss products
 - Diabetes products
 - Sexual enhancement products
- Does the supplement's product label have statements such as the claims below? These claims often indicate that the supplement may contain substances not on the ingredients list, prescription drug analogs, or banned substances.
 - An alternative to (or claiming to have similar effects to) an FDA-approved drug—e.g., “All natural alternative to XYZ.”
 - “Do not take if you have any medical condition, if you are taking any prescription medications, or if you are pregnant.”
 - “May cause a positive result in a performance-enhancing drug test.”
- If the supplement makes a claim about a dietary ingredient affecting normal body structure or function (e.g., “helps promote bone health”), is its product label missing the following statement?
 - “These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.”
- Does the label:
 - Claim to cure a wide range of unrelated diseases (e.g., cancer, AIDS, in addition to diabetes)?
 - Promise “quick fixes” (e.g., cure XYZ in seven days, lose weight in nine days, shrink tumors in one week, cure impotency in two weeks, etc.)?



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- Colloidal Silver
- Coltsfoot
- Comfrey
- Country Mallow
- DMAA (1,3 dimethylamylamine)
- Dolomite
- Ephedra
- European mandrake
- Germanium
- Gamma-butyrolactone (GBL)
- GHB (Gamma hydroxybutyrate)
- Gravel root
- Greater Celandine
- Hawaiian baby woodrose
- Heartleaf (Sida cordifolia)
- Hemp oil
- Horny goat weed (Epimedium grandiflorum)
- Indian snakeroot (Rauwolfia)
- Jaborandi
- Jimson weed
- Kava
- Laminaria
- Lobelia
- Pinellia ternata
- Salvia (Diviner's sage)
- Usnea or Usnic acid
- Vinca rosea (madagascar periwinkle)
- Wild indigo
- Yohimbe
- 5-HTP
- (5-Hydroxytryptophan)
- Aconite
- Adrenal extract
- Aga (Aminita muscaria)
- Alkanna
- American mistletoe
- Apricot kernel
- Aristolochia
- Beth Root
- Bitter Orange (Synephrine)
- Bittersweet nightshade
- Bladderwrack
- Blue Cohosh
- Blue Flag
- Butanediol (BD)
- Buttercup
- Calamus
- Calotropis
- Canadian hemp
- Catnip
- Cesium
- Chaparral
- Chenopodium oil
- Clematis
- Clubmoss

DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS:

RED FLAGS—WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Does the label have:
 - Text in a foreign language?
 - Directions or warnings that resemble FDA-approved drug products?
 - Claims that it is as effective as an FDA-approved drug?
 - Inadequate or absent safety warnings?
 - A black-box warning?
- Is the label missing a third-party certification label? Third-party verification programs evaluate and certify dietary supplements for purity and/or quality. Examples are:
 - United States Pharmacopeia (USP) 
 - Informed-Choice, HFL Sport Science 
 - NSF International 
 - ConsumerLab.com 
 - Banned Substances Control Group (BSCG) 
- Is the product marketed with personal testimonials about amazing results from using the product?
- Did you receive solicitations (emails) offering products in the high-risk product categories?
- Is the product rated 7 or lower by the Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database (NMCD)? The NMCD rates commercial products based on safety, effectiveness, and quality. Each product gets a rating of 1-10 with 10 being the best and 1 being the worst.
- Does the product contain any of the ingredients listed to the left?

If you answered “YES” to several of these questions, you may be consuming an unhealthy or harmful product! Be an informed consumer and choose wisely. However, remember that a supplement cannot replace regular exercise, medical drugs, or a healthy diet.

For additional alerts, click on the links below.

[Athlete Guide to 2014 Prohibited List](#)

[Dietary Supplements/Products Containing DMAA](#)