Food First. Supplement Second.

Dietary supplements are a huge industry in the U.S. Americans spend approximately $36.7 billion per year on supplements.

Are you thinking about taking supplements? Follow the three steps below first.

1. Choose Food Over Supplements.

What it Claims to Do?

- BCAA ( Branched-Chain Amino Acids)
- Quercetin
- Omega-3 Fatty Acids
- Creatine
- Whey

Eat This Instead

- Cottage cheese, fish, sea food, meat, poultry, nuts, seeds, dry whole lentils
- Berries, apples, onions, broccoli, kale, red wine, tea
- Salmon, herring, mackerel, walnuts, canola, olive, flaxseed, and soybean oils
- Lean meat, poultry, fish
- Skim milk, cottage cheese, ricotta cheese, yogurt

For more information on nutrition and how to eat to achieve optimal performance, check out Performance Nutrition 101.

2. Talk to Your Health Care Provider.

- Existing conditions and medical history
- Potential medication interactions
- Dosing recommendations
- Possible safety concerns
- Food and exercise alternatives

Always speak with a health care provider before taking a new supplement. Be prepared to talk about the following:

- Read the label. Make sure the package has a label and it includes required information.
- Watch for false advertising claims. Labels like “natural” or “herbal” don’t mean the supplement is safe or works.
- Know the risks. There is no guarantee of quality, purity, safety, or effectiveness.
- Operation Supplement Safety (OPSS) High-Risk Supplement List provides a list of high-risk supplements to avoid.
- Choose wisely. Look for products with third-party verification programs, such as:
  - United States Pharmacopeial Convention (USP)
  - NSF International
  - Informed-Choice
  - Banned Substances Control Group
  - ConsumerLab.com

- Be informed. Just because a product is sold on a military installation does not mean it is a DoD-approved supplement. Check with your chain of command to determine if there is a local-level policy that impacts you and reference the following resources for more information about health, safety, and efficacy concerns:
  - The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) Healthy Eating Web Page
  - NMCPHC How Safe are Dietary Supplements? Fact Sheet
  - NMCPHC How Healthy Are Dietary Supplements? Fact Sheet
  - Operation Supplement Safety
  - Human Performance Research Center (HPRC) Dietary Supplements Classification System
  - The Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database
  - National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Dietary Supplements Fact Sheets

3. BUY SMART.

Product claims may not always be 100% truthful. Do your research and seek information from trustworthy sources before you buy.

For references and source information click here.

Dietary supplements are consumable products, such as liquids or tablets that contain a dietary ingredient (vitamins, minerals, herbs/botanicals, amino acids, enzymes, metabolites) intended to supplement the diet. Replacements for healthy eating and physical training. Treatment for a medical condition or a cure for an illness.

When it comes down to it, eating smart and healthy will give your body the nutrients it needs to achieve the results you want. A few common supplements and food alternatives are provided here.

Wondering WHY People Spend So Much On Supplements?

Products may not always do what they claim to do or may be unsafe. Supplements are often unnecessary because the same components can be found naturally in foods to help you achieve the results you desire.

Follow the three steps below first.

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