

Dietary Supplement Misuse Among Older Adults

Used properly, nutrient supplements provide vitamins, minerals, and fish oils, while some herbal supplements help manage some chronic conditions. Because supplements are easy to buy and are “natural,” it is easy to think they are safe in any dose for anyone at anytime. But, dietary supplements can be dangerous when not used properly.

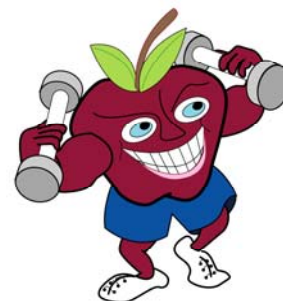


You are misusing dietary supplements if you:

- ___ Think that taking a dietary supplement means you don't have to eat healthy or be physically active. Instead: eat a wide variety of healthy foods, be physically active everyday, and choose supplements wisely.
- ___ Replace prescription medications or therapy with a dietary supplement. Instead: follow your doctor's recommendations.
- ___ Buy supplements from the internet. Instead: buy from a trusted local pharmacy or grocery store.
- ___ Take more than recommended on the label. Instead: follow label instructions.
- ___ Take supplements with meaningless claims, such as “cure-all,” “energy booster,” “exclusive formula,” “all natural,” “weight-loss formula.” Instead: consider taking the supplements listed below that may have health benefits.

You are using dietary supplements wisely if you:

- ___ Talk with your doctor about the right supplements for you.
- ___ Stop taking herbal supplements before surgery.
- ___ Use supplements and eat healthy and exercise daily.
- ___ Take no more than one multivitamin/mineral supplement daily.
- ___ Take calcium supplements if you don't consume three cups of milk or yogurt daily. Take up to 900 mg of calcium supplements daily, but no more than 2,000 mg daily from foods and supplements.
- ___ Take supplements with up to 1,000 IU of vitamin D daily, but no more than 4,000 IU daily from foods and supplements.
- ___ Take up to 200 IU to 400 IU of vitamin E supplements daily, but no more than 1,000 IU daily.
- ___ Take 1 to 3 grams of fish oil daily, if you don't eat at least 8 ounces weekly of fatty fish, such as salmon or trout.



Talk with your doctor to be sure you are using supplements wisely and safely!