

PATIENT CARE AMERICA

3890 Park Central Blvd N., Pompano Beach, FL 33064
Tel: 866-348-0441 Fax: 888-503-6982 info@pcacorp.com



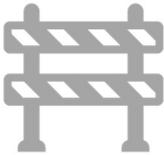
7 Tips for Picking the Right Supplement



Your doctor or regular healthcare provider needs to be kept up to date on any supplements you are taking. If you are considering adding a supplement, speak with them first. They can discuss any possible medication interactions.



Ask yourself, "Will this supplement benefit my health?" If you are eating a well-balanced diet, are not pregnant, and are generally healthy; you likely do not need a vitamin, mineral, or multivitamin supplement. The only exceptions are vitamin D and omega-3 which are more difficult to get in the diet.



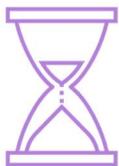
If it is unclear if the supplement will provide a benefit and you are still interested, ask if the supplement is safe. Many products on the market, especially herbs, are not well researched but we have a good idea of which ones are safer than others. Use resources like rxlist.com, the Natural Medicine Database, and your healthcare provider to learn what products could be harmful.



Determine if the supplement brand you have selected is reputable. Many products on the market contain fillers, ingredient substitutes, and even harmful contaminants. Reputable brands submit their products for third-party testing. Just keep in mind that not every company has all their products tested so check for a USP, Consumer Labs, NSF, or UL symbols on product packaging.



For some supplements, good quality means higher cost. Good quality fish oil for omega-3's tends to be expensive. While lower cost brands can be tempting, they usually have much lower levels of omega-3's and they can be contaminated with mercury.



Know the appropriate dose and how long it's safe to take a supplement. A higher dose does not necessarily mean more benefit and can even be harmful. Websites like rxlist.com can tell you which doses of supplements, even herbal products, have been used in research. Keep in mind, most herbal supplements are only indicated for short term use.



Don't be afraid to stop a supplement. If you think you're having an adverse reaction or the product is not working for you, stop taking it. If you had to modify any medication doses because of the supplement, speak with your doctor first.

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