

Supplements

You cannot supplement your way to wellness. Simply put our body was designed to be fueled and nourished from real food. [See my webpage dedicated to supplements.](#)

According to Harvard Health it's a disappointing scorecard when you look at supplements. Most people stand to benefit from vitamin D, many from fiber, and some from fish oil and popular supplements used to treat medical problems fare no better ([see article here](#)). Vegans, pregnant women, and the elderly may need some supplementation, but that is something they should talk to their doctor about.

What most people do not know is that the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act restricts the FDA's ability to regulate products marketed as "dietary supplements," even though most people buy them for health, not nutrition. Manufacturers can sell these products without submitting evidence of their purity, potency, safety, or efficacy. For most claims made on product labels, the law does not require evidence that the claim is accurate or truthful. In fact, the FDA's first opportunity to weigh in comes only after a product is marketed, when it can take action against products that are adulterated, misbranded, or likely to produce injury or illness.

According to Harvard Health supplements can play an important role for some high-risk groups. For instance, adults diagnosed with osteoporosis may require extra vitamin D and calcium beyond what they get from their regular diet. Supplements also can help people with Crohn's disease or celiac disease, conditions that make it difficult to absorb certain nutrients. People with vitamin B12 deficiency almost always need a supplement. Some research also has found that a formula of vitamin C, vitamin E, carotenoids, zinc, and copper can reduce the progression of age-related macular degeneration, a major cause of vision loss among older adults. Moreover, people who are lactose intolerant and do not get enough vitamin D and calcium because they don't eat dairy products also could benefit from supplements



Possible health risks

Most supplements are safe to take, but there are exceptions. For example:

- High doses of beta carotene have been linked to a greater risk of lung cancer in smokers.
- Extra calcium and vitamin D may increase the risk of kidney stones.
- High doses of vitamin E may lead to stroke caused by bleeding in the brain.
- Vitamin K can interfere with the anti-clotting effects of blood thinners.
- Taking high amounts of vitamin B6 for a year or longer has been associated with nerve damage that can impair body movements (the symptoms often go away after the supplements are stopped).

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