



Introduction to Dietary Supplements

What are Dietary Supplements?

Dietary supplements are missing nutrients that are added to the diet. Supplements include herbal remedies, vitamins, minerals, other botanical products, fibers, amino acids, proteins, organ tissues, and metabolites for digestion. A few examples of dietary supplements are alfalfa, Coenzyme Q10, ginkgo biloba, omega 3-fatty acids, St John's Wort, ginseng, Vitamins B6, B12, D, E, etc.



Supplements are especially useful when the diet can't provide the body with all the nutrients it needs to be healthy. This can happen for many reasons, such as normal aging, disease, or ill health.

For a complete list of dietary supplements, background information, detailed descriptions, potential benefits, risks, scientific evidence, dosing, safety, interactions, and other references, take a look at this fabulous resource:

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/herb_All.html

***Did you know about 52% of Americans report using dietary supplements?
(National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, 2005)***

The Skinny About Dietary Supplements

There is a tremendous amount of research happening every day to study the effects of dietary supplements. Dietary supplements can be really, really good for health. In fact, the right dietary supplements will work wonders!

Some supplements have no scientific basis for claims made such as "prolonging life" or "preventing cancer". Other supplements can be harmful, especially when combined with certain medications or with certain chronic health conditions.

To avoid wasting money on supplements that have no nutritional value, or taking supplements that could be harmful, talk to your doctor or dietician before making any purchases.

For more information about supplements, check out this National Institute of Aging resource: <http://www.niapublications.org/agepages/supplements.asp>