

What is a nutritional supplement?

A nutritional supplement is a food derived or artificially entity used to enhance health. It is not a substitute for a good diet, but it can help fill in the gaps if you are not eating as carefully as you should. There are several different categories of supplements , including: amino acids, enzymes, herbal extracts, herbs, minerals, phytochemicals and vitamins.

Can I take supplements with prescription medications?

If you are taking prescription medications, in most cases you can take your supplements with prescription medication.

Tell your doctor what supplements you are taking, particularly if you are being treated for other health problems or are undergoing any medical procedures. Some supplements are natural blood thinners, which is good because they prevent blood clots, but may interfere with healing after surgery. In addition, some supplements may interact with your prescription medication. If your physician is clueless about supplements, ask your pharmacist to check whether there is a risk of interaction.

Can I be allergic to some supplements?

You can be allergic to supplements. For example, if you have a pollen allergy, some herbal supplements, such as chamomile or echinacea, may trigger an allergic response.

You can also be allergic to an additive in a supplement, just as you can be allergic to an additive in a pharmaceutical drug. Therefore you must read the label carefully before buying any product.

Which brands of supplements are the best, and where is the best place to buy them?

Supplements are sold everywhere today, from the Internet to natural food stores to pharmacies and even supermarkets. Choose the location that is most convenient for you and offers the best selection of products. Stick to reputable brands and don't be swayed by the cheapest price.

We recommend that you purchase herbal supplements that are organically grown, and are devoid of pesticides, artificial color, or other chemical additives.

When should I take my supplements?

Most supplements are best absorbed when taken with food. It is also less likely that a supplement will cause stomach upset if taken with a full stomach.

How long will I have to take supplements before I see any results?

Please keep in mind that supplements rarely work overnight. In most cases, it can take two to four weeks for the full effect to kick in.

(From: E. Mindel, Rph, MH, PhD; P. W. Smith, MD, MPH. What You Must Know About Allergy Relief. 2016)