



Dietary Supplements

Patient and Family Education

What is a dietary supplement?

A dietary supplement is any product taken by mouth that contains a dietary ingredient such as:

- Vitamins
- Minerals
- Herbs or other plants (botanicals)
- Amino acids
- Enzymes

Supplements may come in pill, gel capsule, liquid, or powder forms.

Are there safety rules in place for the sale of supplements?

No. There are no laws that state how safe or effective supplements are. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not check supplements. Companies that make them are supposed to make sure that they are safe and contain the ingredients listed on the label.

Is it safe for my child to use supplements?

In general, children's vitamin and mineral supplements are safe to use. Infants and children should not use other dietary supplements without advice from their doctor.

Where can I find more information about supplements?

These Web sites can give you more information about supplements:

- www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/supplmnt.html
The Food and Drug Administration
- www.nccam.nih.gov
The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NIH)
- www.hcrc.org
Healthcare Reality Check sponsored by the Georgia Council on Health Fraud
- www.kidshealth.org
Children's health information from the Nemours Foundation
- www.medlineplus.org
Consumer health information from the National Library of Medicine
- www.texaschildrenshospital.org
Texas Children's Hospital

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In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away.

This is general information and is not specific medical advice for your child. Always consult your child's doctor or other healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about the care or health of your child. A Children's Healthcare of Atlanta pediatric advice nurse is available 24 hours a day at 404-250-KIDS.