

Supplement Smart

**What To Look For When Buying Supplements
And How To Know What Is Good**



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Have you struggled with how to take supplements and wondered which ones you should take?

When you go to the health food store or local CVS even, do you find yourself wondering which of the supplements are right for you?

Is the cheapest one the best?

Is there really any difference between one and another?

Finding the right answers to your supplement questions can be so confusing. In the US alone, it is estimated that 30 billion dollars is being spent in supplements in one year. That is almost as much as health care industry costs each year.

This report is going to help you sort through the maze of information about which supplements are right for you and how to figure it out.

I am **Dr. Shiroko Sokitch**, an MD and acupuncturist in private practice for over 20 years now. My practice is based on helping people solve medical problems that no one else can solve. I have dedicated my life to finding solutions that help you heal in as easy and gentle way as possible. I have had many very sensitive patients in my practice that I have made sure that they were given the cleanest, highest quality products that I could find. I have researched supplements that could actually help when taken.

Supplements are taken for a few different reasons. You may want to improve your health, to achieve a specific health goal, or to heal a condition that you have. Everyone has one specific goal - health improvement. But how would you decide which supplements are best to take? Should you buy each vitamin individually? Should you get a multi? Why is our diet not good enough to help us feel great?

If you are trying to heal a health condition, you would search information about what would help you achieve your goal, but often times you would still not know which of the choices to pick. Turmeric is a great example. It is a herb that works as an anti-inflammatory and has been shown to have a wide variety of benefits. There are literally thousands of different brands containing turmeric out there but which one is right for you?

Are Supplements Necessary?

You may be wondering whether vitamin supplements are necessary if you are on a healthy diet. Fact is that our diet alone is no longer as good as it could have been years ago as our environment is no longer as good as it used to be.



Here are 5 reasons why you need supplements:

1. Our food is not as fresh as it was.
2. Our soil is not as rich as it was.
3. There are more pollutants in our environment now than before.
4. We live busy lives, rarely stopping to rest.
5. There is not as much time in nature restoring our natural vitality.

Organically grown vegetables at whole foods or grocery store were harvested and taken to the market days before you even get them. Before the vegetables reach the store they have been through days of transit, hot lights and a lot of water spray. Heat, travel, and other variations in the environment had affected the nutrients in the veggies. The water-soluble vitamins in the veggies were dissolved and rinsed off by the water spray. Research also shows that our soil is no longer as full of nutrients as it used to be, even when it is organic soil.

Think about how busy your life is. Do you really take the time to care for yourself and to make sure that you are getting all the right nutrients? Even if you do, you are probably not getting the nutrients you need to sustain your busy life. When our bodies were invented, we lived in one place most of our lives, we did not travel at 50 miles or more an hour all day, go into climate-controlled buildings with no fresh air, or fly at elevations of 30,000 feet.

We are now exposed to more pollutants than at any time in our history. You are most likely aware that if you do not live on an organic farm, in the middle of nowhere, you are probably exposed to more pollutants than your body likes. Basic supplements can help your body maintain its ability to do what it needs to do to eliminate the toxins that your body is exposed to.

Today, you do not spend as much time in nature as people in the past used to. Being out in nature is naturally cleansing so if you do not get out much, you need to support your body's nutrition.

Controversy

There are three main elements of controversy about supplements:

1. Do they do any good?
2. What are you getting when you buy them?
3. Are they safe?

There is a fair amount of controversy about taking supplements. Some studies show that they are not effective in helping people become healthier. One study was done using Centrum Silver. If you look at the ingredients in Centrum Silver, you will find that they are of very poor quality,



full of synthetic vitamins and chemicals. Of course they wouldn't be helpful. This is one example of what I mean about making sure that you choose high quality supplements to take.

Other studies done over the course of more than 20 years show that people who take supplements regularly are generally healthier than those who don't. Things like immunity, decreased risk of cancer, and overall health were measured.

A recent PBS episode of *Front Line* talked about the quality of supplements and the dangers of not being sure what you are taking. The show talked about the lack of regulation by the FDA and the possibility that supplements may not contain what it says on the label.

The FDA does actually regulate supplements and there are some strict guidelines that must be followed. Visit <http://www.FDA.gov/Food/DietarySupplements/> for the FDA dietary supplement page.

Other web pages that have useful information on supplements include:

1. [The National Institute of Health](http://ods.od.nih.gov) – NIH

<https://ods.od.nih.gov>

Has an office of dietary supplements.

2. [The Environmental Working Group](http://www.EWG.org)

<http://www.EWG.org>

Has a huge database of the safety of certain ingredients in foods, supplements, and cosmetics.

3. [Consumer Lab](http://www.consumerlab.com)

<http://www.consumerlab.com>

Checks supplement ingredient and quality.

5 Things to Check Out When Buying Supplements

Here are my recommendations to make sure that you get a good product:

1. Only buy a product from a company that is cGMP certified
2. Buy professional level products that are available through a practitioner or online but make sure that they have been researched for quality.
3. Don't buy "standardized extracts" of herbs – they are rarely organic, and they often don't have any of the actual herb in them.
4. Try to get your herbs from a reputable organic herb company.
5. You can research your products through ConsumerLab.com – they regularly evaluate and test products for their content and they check for the efficacy of the product.



Types of Supplements to Consider

There are many types of supplements for all sorts of conditions. Each has a specific purpose and you must know how to choose the right one in each category.

1. Multivitamins/basic nutrients
2. Essential nutrients – These contain supplements that everyone needs and mostly deficient in everyone’s diet like omega fatty acids and vitamin D.
3. Anti-oxidants – These supplements prevent free radicals from forming in your body. Breakdown of cell structure is a natural body process. When they do, they split compounds so that one of them has an unopposed electron floating around. Our bodies naturally don’t like and get rid of free radicals, so the free molecule goes looking for something to pair with, so it can be more stable. A more visual description is when you cut an apple in half and leave it on the counter, in a few hours it will turn brown, that is a free radical reaction. If you sprinkle fresh lemon on the apple slice, it won’t turn brown as fast, because the lemon has anti-oxidants in it that prevents it from turning brown. Anti-oxidants in all forms help our bodies to stay healthy and to not break down readily.
4. Targeted nutritional supplements – These are supplements that have a specific purpose such as detoxing supplements which are designed to help the liver do its job of detoxing our bodies. Types of targeted supplements include anti-inflammatory, immune building, blood pressure support, blood sugar support, arthritis support and more. Basically, these are supplements designed for specific conditions you may want to treat or help. Usually these are a mix of herbs and vitamins that will help you achieve a specific purpose in your health.
5. Medicine – These supplements act more like medicine. You may take them in place of a prescribed drug. Like targeted nutritional supplements, types of medicine supplements include blood pressure support, cholesterol support, blood sugar support, herbal antibiotics or anti-parasitic supplements.
6. Herbs – These are plants that have a medicinal quality. Some of the above supplement protocols include herbs in their formula. I use a lot of herbs in my practice. There’s an herb for almost anything you can think of, it is just finding what is right for you.
7. Glandular supplements – Supplements in this category are made from animal parts to affect a specific organ. Glandular thyroid, ovaries, pituitary and adrenal supplements are available everywhere. I have several cautions about them. I recommend that you not take animal supplements with other things added. Make sure that the glandular product is produced from organically raised animals – fed no chemicals, and raised in a clean environment. This is something you are using to heal your body so don’t let it be from a feedlot.



Ingredients

Supplements are made with the desired ingredients but then often other things are added to enhance them in some way.

Ingredient	Purpose	Examples
Binding agent	Holds the pill together	Magnesium stearate Methyl cellulose Polyethylene glycol
Coating agent	Coats the capsule or pill	Beeswax Hydroxypropyl cellulose Shellac
Coloring agent	Dye	"Natural color" Blue Lake 1 FD&C Red #3
Disintegrant	Allows the pill or tablet to break down more easily in the digestion process	Starch Cellulose
Filler	Adds bulk when only a small amount of ingredient is present in the pill or tablet	Lactose Lecithin Mannose
Emulsifier	Allows fat and water soluble items to mix together	Stearic acid Lecithin
Flavor agent	Adds flavor or masks an unpleasant flavor	
Humectant	Holds moisture in a product	
Preservative	Increases shelf life	Citric acid Potassium sorbate Sodium benzoate
Solubilizing agent	Allows ingredients to mix together	Polysorbate 80
Sweetening agent		Maltodextrin Glycerin Sucralose Neotame
Thickening agent		Carrageenan Sorbitol



A longer list is available on the [Consumer Lab website](#).

I study labels for what's in it, and then what else is in it.

Example:

The label of Centrum Silver Vitamins:

In general – while it may be okay with the FDA to add many ingredients to supplements and sometimes they may be considered necessary, I think about supplements as either medicine for healing, or nutrients for augmenting our food. I wouldn't want to eat food or take medicine that is full of additives. Many of the above listed additives have numerous negative side effects or possible contaminants.

Here is a preview of the side effects of additives:

1. Polyethylene glycol – contaminated with carcinogenic anti-freeze
2. Magnesium stearate – may inhibit absorption of the nutrients you're taking
3. Titanium dioxide – has been classified as "possibly carcinogenic to humans" by the World Health Organization!
4. Neotame (a sweetener 100 x sweeter than aspartame, therefore able to be used in such tiny amounts that you may not be able to measure it in your supplements) – like aspartame, has similar negative effects.

Supplement Companies to Consider

Other ingredients: Calcium carbonate, potassium chloride, ascorbic acid (vit. C), dibasic calcium phosphate, magnesium oxide, di-alpha tocopheryl acetate (vit. E), pregelatinized corn starch, modified food starch, croscopolidone. Contains <2% of: acacia, ascorbyl palmitate, beta-carotene, BHT, biotin, boric acid, calcium pantothenate, calcium stearate, cholecalciferol (vit. D3), chromium picolinate, citric acid, corn starch, cupric sulfate, cyanocobalamin (vit. B12), FD&C blue #2 aluminum lake, FD&C red #40 aluminum lake, FD&C yellow #6 aluminum lake, folic acid, gelatin, hydrogenated palm oil, hypromellose, lecithin, lutein, lycopene, magnesium stearate, manganese sulfate, medium-chain triglycerides, microcrystalline cellulose, niacinamide, nickelous sulfate, phytoecdione (vit. K), polyethylene glycol, polyvinyl alcohol, potassium iodide, pyridoxine hydrochloride (vit. B6), riboflavin (vit. B2), silicon dioxide, sodium ascorbate, sodium benzoate, sodium borate, sodium citrate, sodium metavanadate, sodium molybdate, sodium selenate, sorbic acid, sucrose, taic, thiamine mononitrate (vit. B1), titanium dioxide, tocopherols, vitamin A acetate (vit. A), zinc oxide. May also contain <2% of: Maltodextrin, sodium aluminosilicate, sunflower oil, tribasic calcium phosphate. Contains: Soy.

If you are going to take supplements, make sure that you get the best quality you can find, and that you are actually getting what it says on the label. As the recent *Front Line* show demonstrated, you cannot always be sure. But if you follow certain guidelines, then you can be more certain that you are doing okay.

Here is a list of a few companies that offer high quality products with few or no added chemicals. Keep in mind that these are not the only companies out there, but they have consistently provided high quality products that I recommend to my clients.



Company	Product Line
Metabolic Maintenance www.MetabolicMaintenance.org	Nutritional supplements High quality amino acid for brain chemistry
Pure Encapsulations www.PureEncapsulations.com	Nutrients Antioxidants
Thorn www.Thorne.com	Vitamins Nutrients Specialized products
Mountain Rose Herb www.MountainRoseHerbs.com	Organic herbs and spices
Tattvas www.tattvasherbs.com	Organic ayurvedic herbs
Garden of Life www.gardenoflife.com	Organic vitamins and probiotics
Host Defense www.hostdefense.com	Organic medicinal mushrooms

The Most Important Things to Consider When Buying Supplements

1. Do as much as you can for your health with diet, exercise, and healthy attitude before you add supplements.
2. Listen to your body. If a product doesn't help you, don't take it.
3. Practice healthy living, not chasing illness
4. When you take supplements make sure you are taking in high quality ingredients and products.

Discover the Top 20 Supplements for Healthy Living!

www.HeartToHeartMedicalCenter.com/20-Supplements-For-Healthy-Living/