

## Healthy Eating: Dietary Supplements



Dietary supplements can be vitamins, minerals, herbs, or other plants. They can be pills, capsules, tablets, or liquids. You take them to boost your diet or health. For example, you may take a vitamin to add more nutrients to your diet. You may take an herb to help you sleep.

Supplements can't take the place of eating healthy.

### What are they used for?

Most people take supplements to boost their health. But it is illegal for the makers of dietary supplements to say they can cure, treat, or prevent disease. But they can say their products add to health and well-being.

### Are they safe?

Overall, most dietary supplements are thought to be safe. But the government does not control these supplements in the same way it controls medicines. A supplement can be sold with limited or no research on its safety or how well it works.

Like any medicine, supplements may cause side effects. Supplements can trigger allergies and react with other medicines or supplements you take. These side effects could cause problems with other health conditions you have.

Take all of your supplements with you to your doctor. It will help prevent problems with your medicines. Your doctor needs to see the ingredients on the label to know if they can cause a reaction.

