



National
Defence

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CHIEF OF MILITARY PERSONNEL

CANADIAN FORCES HEALTH SERVICES HEADQUARTERS



COMMANDEMENT DU PERSONNEL MILITAIRE

QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL DES SERVICES DE SANTÉ DES FORCES ARMÉES CANADIENNES

DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS:



What You Need to Know

Dietary supplements are an addition to your diet- they include vitamins, minerals, herbs, amino acids, and enzymes and come in tablets, capsules, powders, gummies and liquids.

Examples of dietary supplements:

Vitamins: e.g., Vitamin D, multivitamins	Herbs: e.g., Echinacea, Garlic
Minerals: e.g., Calcium, Iron	Probiotics: e.g., Lactobacillus
Amino Acids: e.g., Creatine, Glutamine	Others: e.g., Fish oils, Glucosamine
Sports Foods: e.g., protein powder, electrolyte tablets, sports gels	

Food First for Good Nutrition

Eating food is the most important way of supplying your body with nutrients. Dietary supplements cannot replace healthy food in your diet. Healthy eating, smart training and rest are essential for health and performance.

The Darker Side of Supplements



Natural does not always mean safe: Natural supplements can cause unwanted side effects and interact with medications.

Supplements often make false health claims and don't always contain the ingredients listed on their labels.

Contamination with dangerous substances and deliberate addition of ingredients not listed on the label (like stimulants, steroids) also happens.

Consuming dietary supplements may pose health and safety risks, lead to adverse health and performance, and compromise operational readiness.

Current regulations of the supplement industry do not prevent misinformation or the sale of unsafe products.



STRENGTHENING THE FORCES ÉNERGISER LES FORCES

#STF is the CAF/DND's health promotion program, offering expert information, guidance, training, tools, and leadership support to enhance CAF members' health and well-being.



PSP delivers the Strengthening the Forces program on bases and wings. Contact your local Health Promotion Office to register for Social Wellness Courses.

Assessing Your Supplement

- **Credibility:** Are there scientific studies supporting the claims?
- **Balanced Claims:** Are the claims realistic or too good to be true? Are they promoting a one-size-fits-all solution?
- **Bias:** Is the source trying to sell a product?
- **Third-Party Certifications can help:**
 - Independent organizations with no ties to the manufacturing company evaluate and *verify the quality and manufacturing process of the supplement.*
 - Once a product is verified, manufacturers can put the third-party program certification on their product.

Third-party certification only means the product content and label match. It improves confidence in the accuracy of the ingredient list and some safety parameters, however it does not mean the product is safe or effective. *Third-party certifications do not check if claims of health or other benefits from supplements are true or not.*

Reputable Third-Party Certification Organizations:



Key points:

- **Food First:** better nutrition, better performance.
- **Supplements can come with risks** (unlisted contaminant, errors in quantity, side effects) and their claims of benefits might not be substantiated: assess any supplement before taking it.
- **Check for Third-Party Certifications:** Look for seals from reputable organizations.
- **Read Labels Carefully:**
 - Avoid products with the words proprietary blends, matrix and complex ingredients.
 - Is the caffeine content 200 mg or less per serving?
 - Is the label free of questionable or too good to be true claims?
- **Physical and mental performance** rely on smart training, good nutrition, and proper rest/recovery.
- **Consult your healthcare provider** to ensure your supplement will not negatively affect your medical conditions or interact with your medication.

Where to Find Credible Nutrition and Supplement Information:

- [Canada's Food Guide](#)
- [Operation Supplement Safety | OPSS](#)



- You can find a list of supplements by level of evidence and some levels of risk (A to E) from the Australian Institute of Sport.
- Consult a registered dietitian or healthcare provider for personalized advice.

