



Dietary Supplements

WHAT IS A DIETARY SUPPLEMENT?

A dietary supplement is a product (other than tobacco) that...

- is intended to supplement the diet;
- contains one or more dietary ingredients (including vitamins; minerals; herbs or other botanicals; amino acids; and other substances) or their constituents;
- is intended to be taken by mouth such as a pill, capsule, tablet, or liquid.

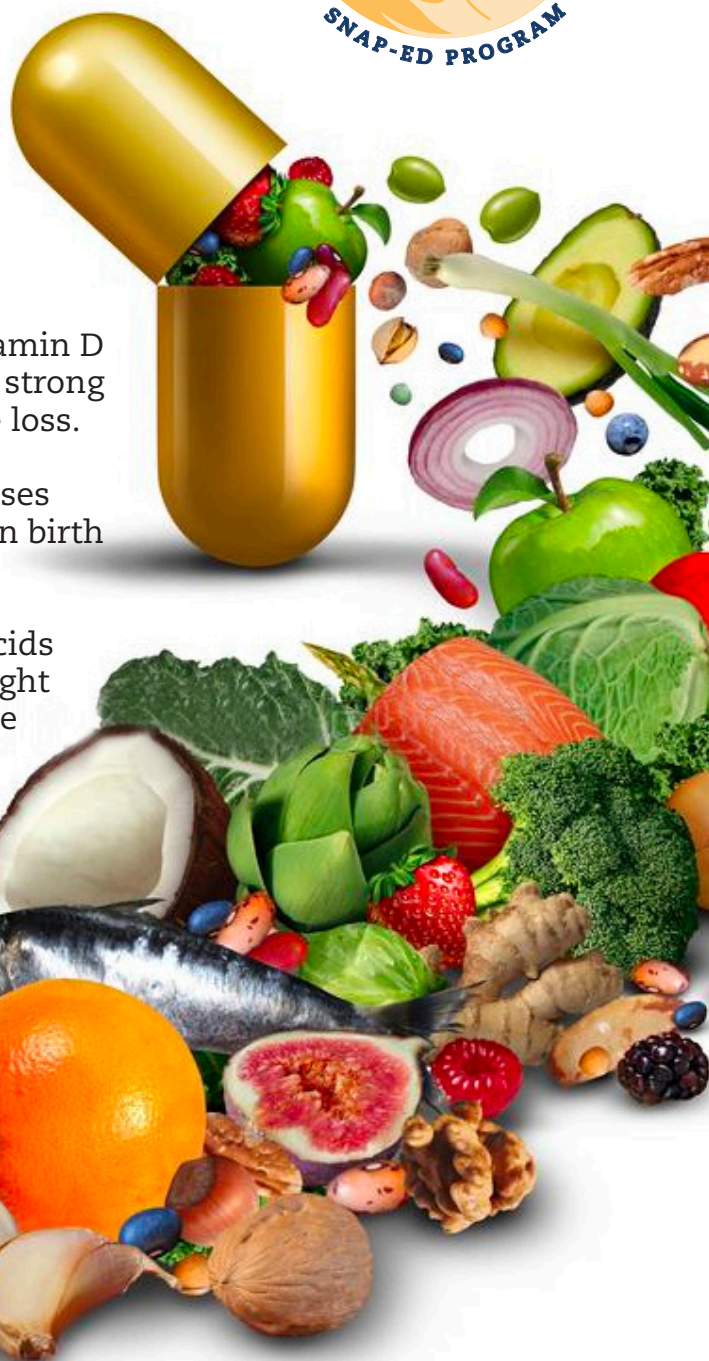
EFFECTIVENESS

Some dietary supplements can help us get adequate amounts of essential nutrients if we don't eat nutritious foods. However, supplements can't take the place of the variety of foods that are important to a healthy diet. To learn more about what makes a healthy diet, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and ChooseMyPlate are good sources of information.

Some dietary supplements can

improve overall health and help manage some health conditions. For example:

- Calcium and vitamin D help keep bones strong and reduce bone loss.
- Folic acid decreases the risk of certain birth defects.
- Omega-3 fatty acids from fish oils might help some people with heart disease.



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Nutritional Supplements (continued)

- A combination of vitamins C and E, zinc, copper, lutein, and zeaxanthin (known as AREDS) may slow down further vision loss in people with age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

SAFETY AND RISK

Many supplements contain active ingredients that can have strong effects on the body. Always be alert to the possibility of a bad reaction, especially when taking a new product. You are most likely to have side effects from dietary supplements if you take them at high doses, take them instead of prescribed medicines, or if you take many different supplements.

KEEP IN MIND

- Consult your healthcare provider before taking dietary supplements

- Get your healthcare provider's approval before taking dietary supplements in place of, or in combination with, prescribed medicines.
- If you are scheduled to have any type of surgical procedure, talk with your healthcare provider about any supplements you take.
- Keep in mind the term "natural" doesn't always mean safe. Some all-natural botanical products, for example, comfrey and kava, can harm the liver.
- Before taking any dietary supplement, talk to your healthcare provider to answer these questions:
 - What are its potential benefits for me?
 - Does it have any safety risks?
 - What is the proper dose to take?
 - How long should I take it?

Developed by Carolyn Robinson, SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator | Reference: <https://ods.od.nih.gov/>



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