Be. Live. Stay. Well...

Dietary Supplements

Top 10 tips for the wise consumer.

1. **Tricky Terminology.** Be cautious of the word “natural” posted on product labels. A product may be natural, but this is not synonymous with “safe".
2. **Questionable Testimonials.** Many products come with testimonials from “actual consumers”. If the product is not backed by anything other than a handful of individuals championing its success, question the accuracy of the claims.
3. **Ingredient Purity & Quality.** Ingredient lists of some products can be misleading. Because supplements are not heavily regulated, product manufacturers are responsible for the label and the contents.
4. **Stakeholder Bias.** Manufacturers have a financial interest in the product, so the claims could be skewed.
5. **Dangerous Combos.** Taking a supplement with any other medication can prove harmful. St. John’s Wart may interfere with some depression medications and cancer treatment protocols. Always check with a Dr.
6. **Side Effects.** Supplements contain active ingredients that have strong effects on the body. Always be aware of the potential for unpleasant side effects.
7. **Efficacy.** True - certain supplements aid in correcting deficiencies. That said, many supplements are just placebos. Conduct quality research from reputable sources to verify the product’s claims.
8. **Need.** Supplements are meant to *supplement* the diet - not replace food. Evaluate your needs with a professional before investing in a product.
9. **Third Party.** Search for a “seal of approval” on any supplement bottle (**see #10 for quality sources**). This means the product was tested by an unbiased source.
10. **Quality Sources.** Use the following links to research before purchasing. www.ftc.gov; Office of Dietary Supplements; US Pharmacopeia

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