Choose food first!

Food should be your first choice to help you meet your goals because supplements...

- Often are unnecessary
- Are not approved by FDA before being sold
- Can be dangerous
- Can be expensive

Whole foods are a natural powerhouse of nutrients such as protein, carbohydrate, vitamins, and minerals that promote energy, muscle growth, performance, and healthy weight maintenance. Whole foods are superior to supplements and should be your first choice, whatever your goals might be. What’s more, whole foods taste better, are safer, and generally cost less!

If you decide to use a supplement, be informed and...

Look for evidence of third-party testing on the label:

Third-party testing ensures...

- What’s on the label is inside the bottle—and nothing else
- Quality of manufacturing

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What is Operation Supplement Safety?

OPSS is a DoD-wide initiative to educate the military community about dietary supplements and provide the tools for them to be informed supplement users—or non-users.

Although some dietary supplements can offer some benefits, others might be unsafe or contaminated with drugs, controlled substances, or other ingredients not listed on the label. The most commonly tainted dietary supplements are those marketed for:

- Bodybuilding
- Weight loss
- Sexual enhancement
- Diabetes

For more information about dietary supplements and nutrition, visit:

Operation Supplement Safety  |  opss.org
Human Performance Resource Center  |  hprc-online.org
U.S. Food and Drug Administration  |  fda.gov
MyPlate  |  choosemyplate.gov
Office of Dietary Supplements  |  ods.od.nih.gov
Supplement: Branched-chain amino acids
Choose these foods instead:
- Fish/seafood
- Meat/poultry
- Nuts/seeds
- Lentils

Supplement: Whey or casein protein
Choose these foods instead:
- Milk/yogurt
- Cottage/ricotta cheese

Supplement: Weight loss or energy booster
Choose these foods instead:
- Water
- Whole grains
- Fruits/vegetables

Supplement: Bodybuilding
Choose these foods instead:
- Fish/seafood
- Meat/poultry
- Dairy/eggs
- Beans

Think you need supplements to fill the gaps in your diet or reach a certain goal? Think again! You can get all the nutrients you need from food.

With a balanced eating plan, dietary supplements are not needed (unless determined by a healthcare provider).

Follow these tips for healthier eating:

Eat regular meals and snacks
- Don’t skip meals
- Plan ahead

Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables
- Fresh fruit or veggies of all colors
- Canned/jarred/frozen fruits & veggies
- Dried fruit

Choose more whole grains
(at least half your grains should be whole)
- Whole-wheat breads, bagels, tortillas, & pastas
- Brown rice, oatmeal
- High-fiber, low-sugar cereals, & granola/snack bars

Incorporate lean protein and dairy sources
- Low-fat milk/chocolate milk (or soymilk)
- Low-fat Greek yogurt
- Beef jerky and other lean meat, fish, or poultry
- Eggs
- Beans

Add healthy sources of fat
- Nuts, seeds, & nut butters
- Avocados
- Plant-based oils (for example, olive & canola oils)

Consume alcohol in moderation
- Men – up to two drinks per day
- Women – up to one drink per day

Limit caffeine intake
- Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, energy drinks, soda, & dietary supplements.

Dietary supplements come in several forms—pills, capsules, tablets, powders, liquids, gels—with an even greater variety of ingredients. Be informed before putting them in your body!

Before you take a supplement, ask yourself:

- Do I really need it?
- What do I expect it to do?
- Does it work?
- Is it safe?
- What’s in it?
- Does it contain a proprietary blend?
- Has it been third-party tested?