

# Understanding Supplements

*Discover the keys to appropriate supplementation*



Americans spend more than \$17 billion a year on nutritional supplements, but few of us know what we get for our money.

Quality standards tend to be hit-or-miss among supplement manufacturers, and individual consumers don't always know what kinds and amounts of supplements they need. The kinds and amounts of supplements you take should be based on your individual health status and on your budgetary requirements.

Too often, I encounter patients spending a large sum of money on low quality supplements, or supplements they don't need. Don't hesitate to seek advice from a healthcare practitioner who has training in nutrition.



## Nutritional Supplements Everyone Should Take

In my experience, there are six nutritional supplements that nearly everyone should take. I would recommend, in consultation with your physician, you consider daily intake of:

- ✓ [Multiple Vitamin](#)
- ✓ [Omega-3](#)
- ✓ [Anti-inflammatory](#)
- ✓ [Vitamin D](#)
- ✓ [Chelated Magnesium](#)
- ✓ [Probiotic](#)

## Multi-Vitamin

Taking a daily therapeutic [multi-vitamin](#) is beneficial even for people who have a reasonably well-rounded diet, but which multi-vitamin you choose will depend on a variety of considerations. Our nutritionists can help you select a multi-vitamin that is right for you. For example, our Men's multi-vitamin does not contain iron which is not needed by most males and may be detrimental.

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## Fish Oil (Omega-3 Fatty Acids)

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Some nutrition experts say that one of the most serious problems with the American diet today is the scarcity of [Omega-3](#) fatty acids in our foods. A major reason Americans are consuming less of this important substance is that we are eating less wild fish and more farm-raised fish. We also tend to eat grain-fed beef, which is low in Omega-3 fatty acids, versus grass-fed beef, which is higher in Omega-3 fatty acids.

Two important Omega-3 fatty acids, called eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), are found in cold-water fatty fish, such as wild salmon, mackerel, herring, anchovies and sardines. Like humans, fish do not synthesize Omega-3 fatty acids, but rather obtain them from their diet (e.g., algae, crustaceans, and other fish).

Farm-raised or Atlantic salmon are fed corn and soy based fish foods, often contaminated with herbicides and pesticides. Frequently sold in supermarkets and restaurants, farm-raised fish has a much lower Omega-3 content than wild caught fish. Astaxanthin is a beneficial antioxidant found in wild caught fish, that gives it the pink coloring. Farm-raised salmon is often injected with a dye to mimic the pink coloring naturally found in wild caught fish.

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## Anti-Inflammatory

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Fighting chronic, excessive inflammation is essential to your health. Most of us need to pay particular attention to this because we suffer from at least some degree of chronic inflammation that arises as a result of poor diet, lack of exercise and ineffective responses to stress. The consequences can be severe.

Obesity and many age-related illnesses are linked to excessive, chronic cellular inflammation. Reducing chronic inflammation can help delay the aging process. Engaging in regular exercise and managing stress more effectively are essential, as are dietary changes.

There are [several high-quality anti-inflammatory supplements](#) on the market. Adding an anti-inflammatory supplement to your regimen is an important pillar. Our providers can help you find one that is right for you.

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## Vitamin D

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Another common deficiency in the American diet involves [vitamin D](#). In fact, some medical experts are referring to this deficit as an epidemic! Recent studies have linked vitamin D deficiency to a range of medical problems such as diabetes, chronic fatigue, osteoporosis, hypertension, multiple sclerosis, increased risk for injury, at least 16 types of cancer, and other diseases, including influenza.

Vitamin D is unlike other vitamins in that our bodies manufacture it when touched by sunlight. Yet many of us spend little time in the sun, especially in the winter and early spring. When warmer weather arrives, we apply sunscreen in order to prevent skin cancer. Without supplemental vitamin D, few of us living in Colorado are likely to get as much as we need. Even though we are exposed to a lot of sunshine in Colorado, the degree at which the sun strikes the surface here makes it very difficult to create enough of this vital vitamin from the sun.



The current recommended daily allowance for vitamin D, most experts say, is woefully inadequate. How much you should supplement is in debate. We can easily check your vitamin D level and help you decide.

Vitamin D3 supplements that are fat-emulsified are easier for the body to absorb. Absorption is especially efficient when the vitamin is delivered in a *fatty acid* matrix within a capsule form (or) in a sublingual drop form. **When taken at night, Vitamin D is an excellent natural treatment for insomnia.** Ever wonder why you get so tired when you have been out in the sun all day? It could be your vitamin D level rising in response to sunlight.

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## Probiotics

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Proper digestion and nutrition starts in the gut. Unless you routinely consume fermented foods such as miso or sauerkraut, you probably would benefit from supplementing with a [probiotic](#). These are living, beneficial bacteria that occur naturally in the human intestinal tract and help you ferment and digest the foods you eat. When a food is fermented, the nutritional value increases exponentially. Did you know sauerkraut has approximately twenty times the vitamin C than the cabbage it originated from? Probiotics are virtual “vitamin factories”.

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## Chelated Magnesium

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About half of all Americans are deficient in [magnesium](#). Low dietary intake, poor absorption, and excessive loss through urine or stool can all lead to deficiency. Excessive alcohol consumption and many pharmaceuticals may deplete magnesium. Because magnesium helps support more than 300 different enzymatic reactions in the body, even a slight deficiency can have far-reaching effects.

Magnesium is often thought of as the “great relaxer.” It relaxes the mind, the muscles, and the nerves. Magnesium is able to relax the smooth muscle of the arteries (to lower blood pressure) and the uterus (to reduce cramps). It is used to treat insomnia, anxiety, migraine headaches, muscle cramps, constipation, and supports brain health.

We recommend a chelated form like magnesium glycinate, which is better absorbed and utilized by the body. Compare this to mineral salts like magnesium oxide or magnesium citrate. Magnesium citrate is good for constipation as it is not well-absorbed and pulls water into the colon.

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## Where to Get Supplements

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Our mission is to provide quality supplements, at affordable prices, from established and respected companies. As more of our patients use the products we recommend, we have the advantage of seeing which supplements seem to work and which don't. We are constantly searching for the best supplements for the best price.

For more information, visit [www.shopthecaregroup.com](http://www.shopthecaregroup.com) or call our office at 303.343.3121.