



SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Affiliated with
National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated Country Women of the World
and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service

Dietary Supplements – Nutrition in a Pill?

Objectives:

1. Participants will define “dietary supplement.”
2. Participants will use a checklist that can be used to talk to their health care provider about their nutritional status and whether taking a dietary supplement(s) is right for them.
3. Participants will evaluate the merits of taking dietary supplements, including describing the potential risks of using dietary supplements.
4. Participants will understand how to choose and use dietary supplements.

Advance Preparation:

Purchase some examples of dietary supplements, such as multivitamins, herbals, sports supplements, powders, etc. Gather magazines and newspapers that have examples of advertisements for dietary supplements.

Ask:

What are dietary supplements are you taking? Why are you taking them?

Say:

Americans spend more than \$25 billion on dietary supplements, including vitamins, minerals, herbs, botanicals, sports nutrition, and other supplements. And, the use of dietary supplements in the United States appears to be growing. People take supplements to improve nutrition, to make up for nutrients missing in the food supply, to decrease susceptibility to or severity of disease, or to increase energy or improve performance. Another factor that may contribute to the increased interest in using dietary supplements is scientific evidence linking diets high in certain nutrients with a reduced risk of certain diseases.

Give out Handout 1: “Dietary Supplements – Nutrition in a Pill?” Discuss the following:

1. What are dietary supplements?

Congress defined the term "dietary supplement" in the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA) of 1994. A dietary supplement is a product taken by mouth that contains a "dietary ingredient" intended to supplement the diet. The "dietary ingredients" in these products may include: vitamins, minerals, herbs or other botanicals, amino acids, and substances such as enzymes, organ tissues, glandulars, and metabolites. Dietary supplements can also be extracts or concentrates, and may be found in many forms such as tablets, capsules, softgels, gelcaps, liquids, or powders. They can also be in other forms, such as a bar, but if they are, information on their label must not represent the product as a conventional food or a sole item of a meal or diet. Whatever their form may be, DSHEA places dietary supplements in a special category under the general umbrella of "foods," not drugs, and requires that every supplement be labeled a dietary supplement.

Show some examples of dietary supplements such as multivitamins, herbals, sports bars, powders, etc.

2. What are the risks to using dietary supplements?
3. The importance of talking to a health care provider about dietary supplement use.
4. How to spot a false claim related to dietary supplements. Take some magazines and newspapers and ask the group to locate advertisements for dietary supplements. As a group, evaluate the advertisements using the information provided in the handout.
5. Ask participants to complete the nutrition assessment portion of the handout. Discuss.

Dietary Supplement Resources

Federal Government Agencies:

- Administration on Aging, DHHS: <http://www.aoa.gov>
- Food and Drug Administration, DHHS, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/supplmnt.html>
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/ds-savvy.html>
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/label.html>
- National Institutes of Health, DHHS:
 - Office of Dietary Supplements: <http://dietary-supplements.info.nih.gov>
 - National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (<http://nccam.nih.gov>) and Clearinghouse (1-888-624-6226)
- Office on Women's Health, DHHS: <http://www.4woman.gov/owh/index.htm> or 1-800-994-WOMAN
- Federal Trade Commission: <http://www.ftc.gov>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Information Center: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic>

Others:

- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP): <http://www.aarp.org>
- American Dietetic Association: <http://www.eatright.org>
- American Pharmacists Association: <http://www.pharmacyandyou.org>
- Food Marketing Institute: <http://www.fmi.org>

National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPIE): <http://www.talkaboutrx.org>

References:

Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Available at: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/~dms/supplmnt.html>.

National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements. Available at: http://ods.od.nih.gov/Health_Information/Health_Information.aspx.

Fact Sheets for individual supplements. Available at: http://ods.od.nih.gov/Health_Information/Information_About_Individual_Dietary_Supplements.aspx

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