

**Week 5**

# SUPPLEMENTS & HEALTH CLAIMS

## *Separating Facts from Marketing Hype*

### WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Scroll through social media for a few minutes and you'll probably see someone promoting a vitamin, protein powder, energy drink, or "miracle" supplement. With so many health claims competing for your attention, it can be hard to know what's backed by science and what's simply good marketing. Learning how to evaluate labels, understand health claims, and recognize reliable information can help you make smarter decisions about the products you choose. The best investment in your health isn't believing every claim... it's knowing how to separate facts from marketing hype.



### BIG IDEAS

#### MARKETING ISN'T MEDICAL ADVICE

Just because a product is popular or endorsed by an influencer doesn't mean it's effective. Learning to recognize the difference between advertising and evidence-based information can help you make smarter health decisions.

#### LOOK FOR THE EVIDENCE

Health claims should be supported by reliable scientific research, not personal testimonials. Clinical trials, third-party testing, and USP Verification can provide important information about a product's quality and effectiveness.

#### READ THE LABELS

Dietary supplements are regulated differently than prescription medications. Understanding FDA disclaimers and structure/function claims can help you recognize what a product can, and cannot, legally promise.

#### SUPPLEMENTS AREN'T MAGIC

Supplements can play a role in supporting health, but they aren't a substitute for a balanced diet or medical care. Understanding concepts like bioavailability and efficacy helps you make informed choices instead of relying on marketing hype.



### KEY VOCABULARY

**Bioavailability:** How well and how quickly the body absorbs and uses a nutrient or ingredient.

**Clinical Trial:** A research study involving volunteers that evaluates the safety or effectiveness of a product or treatment.

**Dietary Supplement:** A product intended to add nutrients or other ingredients to the diet, such as vitamins, minerals, herbs, or probiotics.

**Efficacy:** How well a product or treatment works when used as intended.

**Evidence-Based:** Supported by reliable scientific research rather than opinions, testimonials, or marketing claims.

**FDA Disclaimer:** A statement explaining that the FDA has not evaluated certain claims made about a dietary supplement.

**Placebo Effect:** A change in symptoms caused by a person's expectations rather than the treatment itself.

**Structure/Function Claim:** A statement describing how a supplement supports the normal structure or function of the body without claiming to treat a disease.

**Third-Party Testing:** Independent evaluation of a product to verify its ingredients, quality, or purity.

**United States Pharmacopeia (USP) Verification:** A certification showing that a dietary supplement has been independently tested for quality, purity, and manufacturing standards.



## Learn it. Live it.

Dietary supplements can make impressive claims, so it's important to look beyond the marketing. Reading the label can help you make more informed health decisions.

**Challenge:** Choose one dietary supplement at home or in a store and examine its label. Look for the **Supplement Facts** panel, ingredients, serving size, and any disclaimer statements. What can you learn about the product from its label?

**Reflection:** Did anything on the label surprise you or make you ask additional questions before using the product?

## DID YOU KNOW?

More than 1 in 3 U.S. children and teens take dietary supplements, and 1 in 9 take two or more supplements.

**Source:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



## EXPLORE AND EXPLAIN

- Why is it important to understand the difference between a health claim and scientific evidence when choosing a dietary supplement?
- What information should you look for on a supplement label before deciding to purchase or use a product?
- How can a dietary supplement that helps one person be harmful to someone else?
- How can understanding supplement labels and health claims help you make safer, more informed health decisions?



## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

### VIDEO



#### [Can Taking More Supplements Help Your Health?](#)

Learn what "supplement stacking" is and what to consider before combining supplements for energy, strength, or overall health.

### ARTICLE



#### [Is It Really "FDA Approved"?](#)

Find out whether the FDA approves dietary supplements before they're sold and what those disclaimers on supplement

### WEBSITE



#### [Do You Really Know What's in Your Supplement?](#)

Explore USADA's Supplement Connect to learn about supplement risks, third-party certification, and how to make more informed choices.

**"People are constantly trying to sell you products that promise better health. How do you know what's actually worth your money?"**