



# HOLISTIC WELLNESS CHALLENGE

## SUPPLEMENT SAFETY

**CHALLENGE** your Service members to adopt at least one of the recommended resources to better understand and safely use supplements.

### FACTS & FIGURES: DID YOU KNOW?

About **70% of military** personnel report supplement use, compared to approximately 50% of civilians in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike food and medications, **supplements are not approved** by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) before being sold to the public.

Although a supplement facts label is required, it is **not a guarantee of purity, potency, safety, or efficacy.**

### RECOGNIZE THE REASONS & RISKS OF SUPPLEMENT USE

Supplements are products used to help **meet daily requirements of** essential nutrients not adequately obtained from food. Supplements are **not a replacement for a healthy diet**, physical activity, or medication.

**Reasons for taking supplements** can vary such as increasing overall health, boosting energy, building muscle, losing weight, improving sleep, and enhancing physical and sexual performance.

**Risks associated with supplements** can range from mild to serious. Negative side effects include sleep problems, drug interactions, inaccurate test results, and health issues such as irregular heartbeat, tremors, headache, stroke, and even death.






### REPORT ADVERSE REACTIONS

If you experience side effects (e.g., nausea, vomiting, chest pain), stop taking the supplement, contact a healthcare provider, and report the event to the FDA. [www.safetyreporting.hhs.gov](http://www.safetyreporting.hhs.gov). Reporting helps the FDA take action against unsafe products and protect consumers.

### BE VIGILANT

Products, like bodybuilding, weight loss, and sexual performance supplements, are more likely than others to contain harmful or prohibited ingredients. It is up to you to be vigilant.

Review these marketing red flags<sup>2</sup> to help spot supplements that might be unsafe:

-  Claims to prevent, treat, or cure a health condition or disease.
-  Pledges to be all natural.
-  Promises a quick fix.
-  Uses celebrity endorsements.
-  Offers a free trial or money back guarantee.

Before taking any supplement:

- Consult a healthcare provider.
- Check the DoD Prohibited List for a database of prohibited ingredients.
- Look for one of these third party certifications on the supplement label.

### THIRD PARTY CERTIFICATION



Third parties are independent organizations that verify the ingredients and amounts listed on the supplement facts label are accurate. Tests do not ensure safety or efficacy. Results are based solely on the product tested and are no guarantee that future batches of the same product, by the same company, will have comparable results.

### CONTACT US

For more information on supplement safety or other wellness topics, email us at: [ng.ncr.ngb.mbx.resiliency-branch@army.mil](mailto:ng.ncr.ngb.mbx.resiliency-branch@army.mil)



## GET SUPPLEMENT SAVVY

### What does it mean?

- Supplements are consumable products containing substances such as vitamins, minerals, herbs, botanicals, and amino acids that add to the overall diet.
- Supplements come in a variety of forms such as capsules, tablets, liquids, and powders.
- The FDA is not authorized to test supplements before they are sold to the public.

### Why does it matter?

- Without laboratory testing, there is no way of knowing if a supplement contains prohibited ingredients.
- Supplements containing prohibited ingredients could cause health issues or lead to a positive drug test.

### What can you do?

- Check the DoD Prohibited List, look for third party certifications, and consult a healthcare provider before taking a supplement.
- Keep this in mind: natural is not always safer, and if something sounds too good to be true, it is.
- Know that different batches of the same supplement, by the same company, do not always contain the same ingredients; also, different brands of the same supplement are not the same.
- Store supplements in a medication lockbox to protect against accidental or intentional misuse.
- Report adverse reactions to the FDA to help protect others from harm.
- Remember, there are no short cuts. Maintain mission readiness through diet, exercise, and medication as directed by a healthcare provider.

## DEOCS UPDATE



The 2023 Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) is officially closed. Thank you to all who participated. Your input is contributing to a deeper understanding of the National Guard's command culture.

Results are being reviewed and evaluated. Findings will inform the development of state-level Comprehensive Integrated Primary Prevention Plans that will protect Service members from harm.



## RESOURCES TO RECOMMEND



Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6130.06: Use of Dietary Supplements in the DoD. [www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/613006p.PDF](http://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/613006p.PDF)

DoD's Operation Supplement Safety: One-stop-shop for evidence-based information on supplements. [www.opss.org](http://www.opss.org)



- **DoD Prohibited List:** Searchable database of prohibited ingredients.
- **Supplement Scorecard:** Seven questions to quickly screen supplements for safety.
- **Ask the Expert:** Confidential portal to ask questions about a product, brand, ingredient, and more.
- **Resources:** Information on popular topics such as energy drinks, proprietary blends, and drug testing.



FDA's Safety Reporting Portal: Submit supplement safety issues and adverse reactions. [www.safetyreporting.hhs.gov](http://www.safetyreporting.hhs.gov)



## SPOTLIGHT: OPERATION SUPPLEMENT SAFETY

- Operation Supplement Safety (OPSS) is the DoD resource on supplements for Service members and leaders.
- In accordance with DoDI 6130.06, OPSS provides mandatory supplement education for all Service members.
- To schedule a training, email: [OPSStraining@usuhs.edu](mailto:OPSStraining@usuhs.edu)

### REFERENCES:

1. Adverse Effects Associated with Multiple Categories of Dietary Supplements: The Military Dietary Supplement Use Study, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35123127>
2. How To Tell If Your Supplement Might Be Unsafe, <https://www.opss.org/article/how-tell-if-your-supplement-might-be-unsafe>