

Louisiana Pharmacists Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Louisiana Pharmacists Association Educates Consumers about Dietary
Supplements**

As the use of dietary supplements increases, the need for patient education is only growing. While there are useful dietary supplements available, there are many of them that should be used with caution, especially when other medications and disease states are involved.

What is a dietary supplement?

A dietary supplement, also known as a natural health product, is taken by mouth and contains a "dietary ingredient" intended to supplement the diet. Dietary ingredients include:

- vitamins
- minerals
- herbs or other botanicals
- amino acids
- substances used to supplement the diet by increasing the total dietary intake or
- a concentrate, metabolite, constituent or extract

Do Dietary Supplements require FDA approval?

According to U.S law under the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act, the manufacturers of dietary supplements are responsible for determining the quality and safety of their product. Therefore, FDA approval is not necessary before a dietary supplement is marketed. However, the FDA does provide regulations for Current Good Manufacturing Practices for dietary supplement products. If a manufacturer receives any reports about serious adverse reactions associated with their product, they are required to submit this information to the FDA.

While they are not the same, supplements and medications can potentially interact

While most people associate “natural” with “safe,” evidence shows that some dietary supplements can interact with prescription and over-the-counter medications. These interactions can cause serious reactions and side effects. Dietary supplements may also be unsafe for individuals with certain medical conditions or who are pregnant. Therefore, it is important that patients are aware of these effects before starting a dietary supplement regimen.

You have questions, but who has answers?

Pharmacists are excellent sources of knowledge and can answer any questions you may have about a particular supplement. They can provide you with the tools and information you need to research the supplement as well as recommendations and questions for you to discuss with your physician. Always consult with your physician before taking any dietary supplements.

Are you interested in an herbal product?

- 1) Research the product; not all supplements are made equal. Your pharmacist can provide you with sources for this information and can lead you in the right direction.
- 2) Watch out for warnings about the product from the FDA at:
<http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch>
- 3) Consult with your pharmacist or physician before taking any dietary supplement.

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<http://www.fda.gov/Food/DietarySupplements/ConsumerInformation/ucm110417.htm>

The Louisiana Pharmacists Association, established in 1882, strives to promote the interests of all pharmacists of the State of Louisiana. For more information about the LPA and its benefits, contact Julie Fuselier or Phyllis Perron, LPA Co-Executive Directors at 225/346-6883 or visit our website at www.louisianapharmacists.com.

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