

MEDICAL ALERT



EAMD

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Medical Alert Regarding the Use of Dietary Supplements

There is wide spread use of dietary supplements in the military. Recently, multiple 8A Soldiers were hospitalized or experienced serious health side effects from using dietary supplements. Soldiers in Hawaii have suffered permanent organ damage from supplements. Leaders at all levels must ensure Soldiers understand the potential hazards with using these products, especially for those Soldiers who may see them as a “quick fix” to make weight.

The most common reasons active duty personnel give for using dietary supplements include weight loss, improving performance, increasing muscle mass, enhancing energy level and accelerating recovery. Many of these products have safe histories. Millions of Americans responsibly take multi-vitamins safely. Supplements are not regulated like medications and many dietary supplements on the market are tainted and unsafe. Soldiers must carefully consider the use of supplements. Their health care provider and local Military Treatment Facility’s Registered Dietitian are available to assist them in meeting their lifestyle goals in a healthy, nutritional, and effective manner.

REMEMBER:

- Dietary supplements sold on military installations are not always safe and effective.
- Talk to your health care provider or your Military Treatment Facility’s Registered Dietitian before taking a dietary supplement.
- Manufacturers of dietary supplements are not required to conduct research on safety or effectiveness. The Food and Drug Administration does not test or approve dietary supplements before marketing to the public.
- Using multiple supplements together increases the potential for undesired and unsafe side effects.
- A dietary supplement cannot replace regular exercise, medical drugs, or a healthy diet.

If you decide to use a supplement, BE SMART:

- Use well known and high quality products with a third-party certification label (United States Pharmacopeia (USP), NSF International, Informed-Choice, HFL Sport Science or ConsumerLab.com. Third-party verification programs evaluate and certify dietary supplements for purity and/or quality.
- Take no more than is recommended on the label.

Contact the Brian Allgood Army Community Hospital Nutrition Care Division at 737-1570 for more information or to book an appointment. Additional information is available at the Human Performance Resource Center (<http://hprc-online.org/dietary-supplements>) or the Army Medicine Performance Triad website (<http://armymedicine.mil/pages/performance-triad.aspx>).

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