

Supplement FAQ's



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Please visit Dr. Cheikin's website, www.cheikin.com, and review the articles entitled "Scoop on Supplements" and "FrankenFoods" in addition to these FAQ's.

1) Why do we need supplements? In essence, we need supplements for two reasons: 1) to replace nutrients that are missing from our foods and bodies because of the way they are grown (such as depleted soils, long periods of travel), processed (high heat); and 2) to help the body detoxify and defend against toxins that have got into our body through food, air, water and other means (such as cosmetics).

2) What if I eat well, and mostly organic foods? This does not fully correct the issues discussed in question 1 above.

3) How many pills do I have to take? We classify supplements into those that are "core" and those that are therapeutic. Core supplements are those that we need to take for the rest of our lives to achieve and maintain optimal health. These include: a potent multi-vitamin, DHA/EPA ("fish oils" or omega-3 oils), GLA (anti-inflammatory omega-6 oils), and probably pro-biotic bacteria. Therapeutic supplements are those that are required to correct deficiencies based on lab tests (such as magnesium, vitamins B12 and D), symptoms, or other factors. These will be taken for a period of time, usually 3-12 months.

4) What if I have problems tolerating supplements? The most common difficulties are with B vitamins (usually in multi's) and with fish oils. Usually this is due to sub-optimal digestion, is an important clue to why you may be deficient in the first place. This can usually be remedied by the addition of the appropriate digestive aids. We will begin your supplement program slowly, and ramp it up over several weeks to months. We will see you three weeks after beginning your supplement program to monitor tolerance and make appropriate adjustments. We will repeat blood tests and other measurements after 2-3 months. If absorption is sub-optimal, additional important evaluations will be indicated.

See question 15 for more information about intolerance.

5) Don't most supplements end up in the toilet? There are two considerations here. First, the supplements should be tested for their ability to dissolve and be absorbed. Also, while some supplements pass through your body, as does water, what is important is their effect on your body as they turn on and off certain metabolic processes (in part, "programming" your genetic tendencies in the right direction).

6) What about the quality of the supplements? Supplements are sometimes called "nutriceuticals", implying that they are as important as pharmaceuticals

(drugs). Indeed they have the advantage of having a higher benefit-to-risk ratio than most drugs. In other words, they usually have a very low side-effect profile. Dr. Cheikin and staff have spent hundreds of hours researching the various companies and their products for quality and cost-effectiveness. Most companies we support use "GMP" or Good Manufacturing Practice, and some use independent labs to ensure the potency and purity of their products. We believe the supplements we provide are the best "bang for your buck" and will give you the best chance of achieving optimal health. We use these same supplements for ourselves and our families.

7) What if I can buy cheaper supplements locally or on the internet? We have chosen the ones we carry because of their cost-effectiveness. If there was a brand that was equivalent and cheaper, we would carry it. The small amount you can save is not worth the time and risk of sub-optimal results. We take your concerns seriously and have formulated your program to achieve optimal results in the most efficient way.

8) Can't I take my supplements once a day? No. Most are designed to take with meals to reinforce what is in the food. We don't eat, drink or breathe once a day; taking supplements once a day will not get the desired results. This is in part because many supplements are water soluble and only last in your body six hours. While the optimal frequency is three to four times a day, a compromise is twice a day. (Some special supplements will be taken between meals or at bedtime).

9) How can I make my supplement program easier? Having the right tools for any job is essential. Opening 4-10 bottles twice a day is not sustainable or convenient. Therefore, having the right pill containers is essential. They should be large enough to hold all your morning or evening supplements for a week. We also recommend ones that lock if you travel or have small grand/children in your home or car. Dr. Cheikin has successfully used 10 containers for his monthly program: am and pm containers for weeks 1-4, plus a second week 4 so that weeks 1-4 can be filled up while finishing week 4 from the prior month. Most supplements come in one-month supplies, which enables such a strategy.

Also, keeping your pill containers in a visible and functional place (kitchen cabinet with morning tea, refrigerator, bathroom sink etc.) can be helpful. Finally, keeping a log and checking it off can serve as an important tool (Dr. Cheikin tapes such a log inside his kitchen cabinet).

10) What if I forget a dose? It doesn't pay to double up. Realistically, if you take your supplements 10-12 times out of a maximum of 14 times (7 days times 2x/day), you are doing pretty well.

11) How long will it take for the supplements to work? How will I know they are working? Because most

supplements work at the cellular level, it takes a while for them to get into your cells, push out other compounds (such as previously ingested hydrogenated oils), and adjust the biochemistry of each cell. This may take several months. The positive effects usually sneak up on you. Likewise, if your supplement program lapses (which happens from time-to-time to the best of us!), you will sustain the benefits for a week or two and then begin to slip back to where you began. You then restart your supplements and begin to improve again. This A-B-A-B design is a valid method for testing the effectiveness of any intervention.

12) I am a vegetarian. Are your supplements free of animal products? Most supplements, with the exception of "fish oils" are vegetarian.

13) I take flax or hemp oil for my omega-3 oils. Is this sufficient? In most cases, this is not. Most of us only convert 5-10% of flax oil's alpha linolenic acid into the anti-inflammatory DHA/EPA in fish oil. If the average adult needs at least 2000 mg of DHA/EPA, this means that they would have to take 10-20 times this amount as flax or hemp oil. For those vegetarians who are adamant about not taking fish oils, there are other alternatives that are more expensive but available. We can also do a "fatty acid analysis" to measure the balance of oils in your body. We do recommend that all patients take DHA/EPA at least for a while.

14) What if I cannot afford the supplement program? Can I take less? This is similar to the issue of not being able to afford medications or other health care. These supplements are cheaper than the equivalent (which there often is none) in drugs, though we have the illusion that drugs are "being covered by health insurance". Ultimately, we pay for them.

Since we are designing an optimal program for you, taking less than what is recommended will not achieve optimal results in optimal time. However, sometimes, a compromise is necessary. At other times, it is a matter of reviewing priorities. Most people would spend a far greater amount than we are recommending to fix their car, or care for their teeth or pet.

We would prefer that you are honest with us about your situation and priorities. For your convenience, we do accept credit cards. We are also exploring options for payment plans. Since we are committed to your healing and wellness, we will do all we can within reason to work out a plan that you can afford. We also encourage patients to explore HSA's (Healthcare Savings Accounts) with their employers, which can be used to pay for supplements provided by a physician for a specific medical diagnosis.

15) What if I have an undesired reaction to my supplements and can't tell which is doing it? You should stop all new supplements for a few days and then add one in at a time, starting with the one you are most suspicious of. If this doesn't work, either email Dr. Cheikin, call the office or schedule an earlier visit. Please do not waste a month or more while waiting for your next

appointment.

16) What if I don't eat breakfast or don't eat enough to take all my supplements? As long as you spread them over the day, you can take them at other times, such as lunch and dinner. However, they should be taken at least two hours before bedtime. (However, certain specific supplements are to be taken at bedtime).

17) What if I can't get back to the office before my supplements run out? We can mail your supplements to you, usually at a cost less than gas and your time. We routinely mail supplements on Wednesdays if your request is called or emailed in by noontime Monday. We can also mail supplements at other times or overnight if the additional cost is worthwhile to you.

18) What if my other doctor(s) and/or family/ friends do not believe in supplements? We can provide quality information to support the use of supplements. It is easily to prove their safety when compared to drugs, which are in the top five causes of illness and death in our country.

19) What is the role of digestive enzymes, acid and probiotic bacteria in supplement regimens? This is a complex but very important topic that is addressed in separate publications. Please ask if you want copies or go to the website and review the articles on "Stomach Acid", "Enzymes" (pending), and "GI and Inflammation" and "Yeast" (for information on probiotics).

20) What if I don't want to take supplements? Holistic Medicine offers many paths to healing. While supplements are an important tool, they are not the only one. If you are willing to endure a slower healing process, and the cost of other modalities, then some people can achieve satisfactory results without supplements.

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