Could Your Dietary Supplement be Spiked?

More than 3 out of 4 Americans take dietary supplements.1

The FDA does not approve dietary supplement products before they go to market but can take action against unsafe or adulterated dietary supplements containing hidden drugs or other undeclared ingredients.

In the past 25 years, the dietary supplement industry grew from $4 billion with 4,000 products to $40 billion with 50,000+ products.2

How to choose and use dietary supplements responsibly:

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Dietary supplements are intended to complement a well-balanced diet and healthy lifestyle, not to replace it, and include:

• Vitamins & Minerals (nutrients the body needs to function)
• Herbs & Botanicals (supplements sourced from plants)
• Specialty Supplements (sports nutrition, weight management, sexual enhancement and others)

From 2007-2019, 965 of the products tested by the FDA were identified to include potentially hazardous substances or hidden ingredients, including:

• Sildenafil (the active ingredient in Viagra®)
• Sibutramine (a weight loss drug withdrawn from use because of an increased risk of cardiovascular events)
• Steroids

Of these products, most fall into 3 categories:

52% Sexual Enhancement
37% Weight Management
10% Muscle Building

Spiked supplements may contain:

Ingredients not on the label
Prescription drugs
Controlled substances

Some ways to tell if a dietary supplement could actually be a spiked product:

It promises effects too good to be true
It warns you may test positive in performance enhancement drug tests
It features extreme claims, drug-like claims, or promises miracle results

What risks are involved with spiked supplements?

Unexpected allergic reactions
Negative interactions with prescription drugs
Adverse health effects
Consumption of illegal substances

How to choose and use dietary supplements responsibly:

Avoid supplements with claims like “quick fix” or “miracle”

“Natural” does not always mean “safe”

Remember that problems with products labeled as dietary supplements can be reported to the FDA here.

Talk to your health care team to determine if dietary supplements should play a role in your health care regimen.


Visit DSQCollaborative.org for more information.