

# Making Sense of Supplements

Have you ever wanted to try a product that claims to burn fat or help you lose weight fast? It might be tough to figure out what is truth and what is hype. Here are some questions to help you sort fact from fiction.

- **Does it sound too good to be true?**  
If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Sometimes these claims are meant to get your attention. Companies do not need to provide legal proof for the health claims put on bottles.
- **Is a person or organization being paid to promote the product?**  
Famous people often promote products to make money. This doesn't mean the person uses the product or that it is safe or effective for you.
- **Is there a Natural Product Number (NPN) on the package?**  
An NPN is an eight-digit number found on some supplement packages sold in Canada. Health Canada says that products with an NPN are safe and effective if you follow the instructions. But these products may still have side effects when mixed with other medicines or alcohol.
- **Have you read the fine print?**  
Many supplements have extra ingredients. If you have a food allergy or intolerance, check the ingredient list to make sure it is safe for you to take.
- **Have you talked to your doctor, dietitian or pharmacist?**  
Although supplements are not prescription, they should be treated as such. Ask a health professional before taking any supplement.

## Note:

AHS recommends women of child-bearing age take a multivitamin containing folic acid daily.

AHS recommends all Albertans take a vitamin D supplement daily:

- Ages 0–50 take 400 International Units (IU)
- Ages 50+ take 1000 IU

If you have more specific questions about choosing a nutrition supplement, talk with a registered dietitian. Look for one in your local area or call Health Link at 811.

