

NUTRITION NEWS

New Effort To Verify Supplement Labels

(NAPSA)—There's news that may make concerns about the safety of dietary supplements easier to swallow. While millions take them each year, many consumers don't realize that supplements, which include vitamins, minerals and other nutritional products, are not regulated by the government as stringently as medications.

Fortunately, steps are being taken to make sure that what's stated on the label is what's actually contained in the product.

To help consumers make good purchasing decisions, United States Pharmacopeia (USP), a leading organization that verifies dietary supplements, has created a program to help inform consumers who use dietary supplements.

The verification program evaluates and verifies dietary supplements according to stringent requirements for purity, accuracy of ingredient labeling and proper and sanitary manufacturing practices. Once supplements meet these requirements, USP allows manufacturers to prominently display the verified mark on the label.

The program assures consumers that a product:

- Contains the ingredients stated on the label;
- Has the declared amount of strength of ingredients;
- Will dissolve to release the contents of the dietary supplement for absorption into the body;
- Was tested for harmful contaminants, such as heavy metals, E-coli and pesticides; and
- Has been manufactured



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using safe, sanitary and well-controlled procedures.

Many believe USP is uniquely suited to verify dietary supplements since its public health mission is to create standards that help ensure the quality of prescription and over-the-counter medicines, dietary supplements and other health care technologies.

Once a product has been certified, the program will periodically conduct random tests on verified supplements to ensure that the products continue to meet the standards on an ongoing basis.

Dietary supplement products bearing the USP verification mark have appeared on retailer and pharmacy shelves since December 2002.

For a listing of verified products or for further information about the program, please visit www.usp.org/USPVerified/dietarySupplements/.