

The Senior Medicare Patrol is.....

LOOKING OUT FOR YOU

DATE: 3/1/16

2016-3

SUBJECT: Dietary Supplements: Help or Harm?

March is National Nutrition Month

Are you playing Russian Roulette with your health?

Have you responded to TV ads, received phone calls, or met with would-be scammers who urged you to buy pills, powders, or herbs to reverse memory loss, cure arthritis or cancer, enhance sexual performance, or treat other age-related problems? If you answered YES to these questions, you are risking your life as if playing with a loaded gun!

Dangerous supplements like OxyElite Pro and Jack3d, claiming to bring about weight loss and build muscle, were marketed without approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). They were taken off the shelves and the makers charged with fraud on 11/17/15, when cases of liver failures, transplants, and deaths were reported.

Herbal supplements like Green Tea Extract have been found to be tainted with pesticides, unknown fillers, and other toxic ingredients.

The FDA does not review dietary supplements for safety and effectiveness before they hit the market. Because they are not proven to be safe and effective, federal law bans dietary supplements from being promoted as treatment for a disease.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) says these sales pitches signal fraud:

- Claims one product does it all; suggests the product can treat or cure disease
- Uses words like "scientific breakthrough," "miraculous cure," "exclusive"
- Uses misleading scientific-sounding terms and undocumented testimonials by patients or doctors
- Demands payment in advance; promises no-risk money-back guarantees

- **REMEMBER:** Medicare does not cover supplements the FDA has not approved or when not part of medical nutrition therapy Medicare covers.
- **PROTECT** yourself from dietary supplement scams. Listen to the Latin phrase "Caveat Emptor," meaning "Buyer Beware." Question untested, unapproved, and unknown supplements. Follow this rule of thumb: If it sounds too good to be true, don't get it.
- **DETECT** questionable claims on your medical statement that could be signs of fraud.
- **REPORT** suspicious activity to the Hawaii SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL at 1-800-296-9422.



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See back page for *Consumer Reports'* list of 12 supplements to avoid

Resources for Information about Dietary Supplements

Federal Drug Administration

For safety alerts and to report serious problems with human medical products

www.fda.gov

808-522-8011 x100

MedWatch Online Voluntary Reporting Form at:

<https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/medwatch/index.cfm?action=reporting.home>

Federal Trade Commission

For scam alerts

<http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/search/site/dietary%20supplements>

Office of Dietary Supplements

For fact sheets about dietary supplements

<https://ods.od.nih.gov/>

U.S. Pharmacopeia

For a list of verified products

<http://www.usp.org/dietary-supplements/overview>

The U.S. Pharmacopeia seal on product packaging indicates the products have been evaluated and tested.

Consumer Reports

“The dangers of dietary and nutritional supplements investigated

What you don't know about these 12 ingredients could hurt you”

Lists 12 supplements to avoid: ACONITE, BITTER ORANGE, CHAPARRAL, COLLOIDAL SILVER, COLTSFOOT, COMFREY, COUNTRY MALLOW, GERMANIUM, GREATER CELANDINE, KAVA, LOBELIA, YOHIMBE,

<http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/2012/05/dangerous-supplements/index.htm>

Medicare

For information about Medicare coverage of dietary supplements

<https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/your-medicare-coverage.html?q=dietary%20supplements>

***ALWAYS TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE
USING SUPPLEMENTS***