



Supplements Bad?

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Millions of people around the world take dietary supplements in the belief that they will boost their health. New research casts doubt on the benefits of these pills and tablets. A new report from the American organisation Consumer Reports (CR) found serious health risks from supplements that included vitamins, probiotics, and weight loss pills. CR said the biggest problem with supplements is that they are largely unregulated. While medicinal drugs have to be tested for safety and effectiveness, dietary supplements need far less government approval in many countries. This means that consumers are largely in the dark regarding the ingredients of the supplements and how the body will react to them.

Lisa Gill, an editor at CR, said the report showed how dangerous many supplements were. She said they could cause liver failure, kidney failure requiring kidney transplants, seizures, and heart problems. Gill added: "Just because it's not prescription, you say, 'oh, it's safe,' but that's not necessarily true." Gill urges consumers to avoid 15 ingredients commonly found in supplements, including red yeast and caffeine powder. She warned: "There have been deaths associated with each of these." She told people to seek medical help before taking supplements. She said: "Tell your doctor and your pharmacist what you're taking. Treat it like a medication. It's that important. It's really about your health."

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