

# Dietary supplement quality

Quality standards for supplements are important because they help ensure a product is safe, effective, and accurately labeled. Talking to your healthcare provider and understanding supplement labels can help you choose the supplements that are best suited to your individual needs.

## Selecting quality supplements

Supplements should always be purchased from trusted sources, such as:

- Brand/manufacturer websites
- Certain specialty or health food retailers
- Healthcare practitioners/clinics who stock supplements directly from the brand
- Virtual dispensaries that stock supplements directly from the brand (e.g., Fullscript)

Resellers may not have proper warehousing standards, training programs for staff, formal quality control, or recall and adverse reaction processes in place. This increases the risk of cross-contamination of ingredients, improper labeling, incorrect storage practices, expired ingredients, and other issues that may adversely impact an individual's health.

## Third-party certifications

In addition to the basic guidelines set by the FDA, known as the Current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMPs), manufacturers and distributors of dietary supplements may choose to obtain certifications from third-party companies. Third-party companies provide unbiased assurance that certain quality criteria are met. You will often see a certification mark on products that have been third-party verified.

Common third-party certifications include:

- Gluten-free (e.g., [Certified Gluten-Free](#))
- Non-GMO (e.g., [Non-GMO Project Verified](#))
- National Sanitation Foundation (NSF)
- Organic (e.g., [USDA Organic](#), [Canada Organic](#))
- Vegan (e.g., [Certified Vegan](#))

## Label claims

Many supplement brands feature claims on their labels to help consumers find suitable products depending on their personal values, preferences, and factors such as allergies or sensitivities.

Common label claims include:

- Animal product-free
- Artificial preservative-free
- Gluten-free
- Non-GMO
- Shellfish-free



## References

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5. U.S. Department of Agriculture. (n.d.). USDA Organic. U.S. Department of Agriculture. <https://www.usda.gov/topics/organic>
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This handout was developed and medically reviewed by Fullscript's Integrative Medical Advisory team.

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