



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

HEADQUARTERS, 10th MOUNTAIN DIVISION, (LIGHT INFANTRY) AND FORT DRUM

FORT DRUM, NEW YORK 13602-5000

Dietary Supplements

INSTRUCTION FOR LEADER

Complete outlined tasks in preparation for training. During training, you will read the script directly and complete an AAR. The script includes optional check on learning activities to verify Soldiers understand the lesson.

PREPARATION

1. Print and review this leader guide to ensure subject familiarity.
2. Print enough handouts for number of Soldiers in training.

OBJECTIVE

1. Soldiers will be able to define dietary supplements and understand both the benefits and risks of dietary supplements to make informed and safe choices.

SCRIPT TO BE READ DIRECTLY

1. [Instructor asks:] What is a Dietary Supplement?

- a. A dietary supplement refers to a product that enhances the diet. Examples include vitamins, minerals, pre-workout, or protein powder. Dietary supplements come in many forms including tablets, capsules, gummies, powder, or liquids. Supplements can promote overall health, improve performance, or aid in recovery. Supplements do not replace food. Just like medicine, you can overdose supplements. Before deciding to use a supplement, consider the following:
 - i. Supplements are meant to add to a healthy diet, not replace healthy food. Only choose supplements that you would otherwise receive from the diet. Vitamins and minerals found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and dairy are easier for our bodies to absorb than those found in supplements. Consuming natural foods also provides a wide range of nutrients, enzymes, and proteins that work cooperatively in our bodies. Avoid prohormones, 'natural steroids,' and 'hormone boosters.'

2. [Instructor asks:] Are Dietary Supplements Regulated?

- a. Answer: The FDA does NOT have the authority to regulate supplements for purity, safety, and effectiveness before they hit the shelves. Dietary supplements are only investigated when negative side effects (i.e. stroke, heart attack, death) occur.

3. [Instructor asks:] What are the risks of taking a dietary supplement?



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- a. Product contamination: Companies may not always use the purest ingredients, monitor production, or dose ingredients at the appropriate level. Third-party certifications can ensure you're receiving a safe product with the right ingredients.
 - b. Undisclosed ingredients: Banned and/or ingredients with major health risks can easily be added to products without them being noted on the Supplement Facts label.
 - c. Stacking ingredients and stimulants: It's especially dangerous to stack supplements because of the number of potential combinations and interactions. One risky stacking method is the "EAC" stack, with ephedra, aspirin, and caffeine, which has been proven deadly.
 - d. Proprietary blends: A 'proprietary blend' is like a company's 'secret sauce.' Supplement companies do not need to disclose how much of each ingredient is included in their blend, only how much of the blend they added to the product. Other terms for a proprietary blend include 'mix,' 'matrix,' 'complex,' or 'proprietary formulation.'
 - i. Avoid any product that uses red-flag terms such as "energizer", "fat burner", "metabolic booster", "proprietary", "blend", "mix" or "matrix" as they are more likely to contain DOD banned substances such as DMAA, DMBA, Ephedra, Human Growth Hormone, IGF-1, CBD, Hemp, and SARMS.
4. [Instructor asks:] What does it mean for a product to have been third-party tested?
- a. A third-party certification confirms the supplement has been tested and that the ingredients and manufacturing and storage facilities meet good manufacturing practices requirements. Certification seals confirm that a product contains the ingredients listed on the label, but they do not ensure a product's effectiveness or safety.
 - b. Look for logos such as the BSCG Certified Drug Free, the Informed Sport, the NSF Certified Sport, and the USP verified. (See Figure 1.)
 - c. Speak with your healthcare provider or your H2F Dietitian if you have questions, concerns, or have experienced possible harmful interactions regarding the use of supplements.

Figure 1. Third Party Certifying Bodies



CAUTION: Just because one product is certified, it does NOT mean that all the company's products are third party tested.

OPTIONAL CHECK ON LEARNING

1. **Practical Exercise:**
 - a. Take out your phone and look up the label for a dietary supplement that you take or have taken in the past.



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- i. Is there a third-party logo present?
 - ii. Are there red flag terms such as “energizer”, “fat burner”, “metabolic booster”, “proprietary”, “blend”, “mix” or “matrix”?
 - iii. Is there more than 200 mg of caffeine?
 - iv. Do you notice any health claims such as, “decreases body fat” ?
- b. If you notice that there is not a third-party logo, red flag terms, more than 200 mg of caffeine, or questionable health claims, it is likely a risky supplement. Consider contacting your H2F RD for more information.

AAR

1. What were the pros and cons of this training?
2. Will you look for third party certification if you choose a supplement?

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

1. *Operation Supplement Safety*; www.opss.org
 - a. Features a prohibited list of dietary supplements for service members and educational resources on various dietary supplements
2. FM 7-22; Chapter 8 Section 48-56

Supplement Safety: Messages For Leadership

Operation Supplement Safety (OPSS) is a DoD-wide program, based on DoDI 6130.06, designed to educate Service Members and retirees, their family members, leaders, healthcare providers, and DoD civilians about dietary supplements so they can make informed choices. Many Service Members use dietary supplements to build muscle, lose weight, increase energy, or enhance sexual performance, yet they are unaware of the potential risks and consequences.

KEY MESSAGES

- FDA does not evaluate dietary supplements for safety, quality, or effectiveness before they enter the market.
- Dietary supplements are intended to supplement the diet. They are not substitutes for a healthy, balanced eating plan.
- According to DoDI 6130.06, Service Members are not allowed to use dietary supplements with prohibited ingredients.
- If Service Members choose to use a dietary supplement, they should look for products that carry a third-party seal (examples):
- Third-party certification does not guarantee a dietary supplement is safe or effective, but it will reduce the risk of consuming a potentially unsafe ingredient or a product with a prohibited ingredient, or of testing positive on a DoD drug test.
- Dietary supplements could contain ingredients not listed on the Supplement Facts label.

LEADERSHIP'S ROLE

- Help spread the Key Messages on supplement safety.
- Encourage all personnel to use the OPSS website at OPSS.org.
- Provide training opportunities to ensure Service Members receive dietary supplement education as required by DoDI 6130.06.
- Model and emphasize responsible use of dietary supplements.

