

How to read a supplement label

Dietary supplements are regulated by the FDA, and all labels must follow a consistent format to make it easier for consumers to understand supplements. There are some tricks to understanding dietary supplement labels well, so be sure to pay attention to the following points when you're evaluating your supplements.

Supplement Facts		
Serving Size 2 Capsules Servings Per Container 30		
	Amount Per Serving	% Daily Value
Vitamin C	500mg	834%*
Zinc	20mg	199%*
Beta Glucans	300mg	†
Echinacea purpurea Standardized to 4% alkylamides (4 mg)	100mg	†
Proprietary blend	500mg	
Echinacea angustifolia (leaf)		†
Allium sativum (bulb)		†
Withania somnifera (root)		†
Ganoderma lucidum (aerial parts)		†
Rhodiola rosea (root)		†
Andrographis paniculata (aerial parts)		†

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.
† Daily Value not established.

The "Supplement Facts" title is an indicator that the product is marketed for sale in the U.S. and is an FDA standard.

The serving size, and sometimes the number of servings per container, will be included to help you compare more easily between products.

Make sure the serving sizes match when comparing supplements to get an accurate comparison between the products.

Vitamins and minerals will always show the dose in both weight and % daily value to help you understand how you're hitting your dietary requirements.

Many supplements will have doses that exceed the recommended daily value.

Dietary supplement ingredients that are not vitamins or minerals will not have a % daily value as they are not essential ingredients in the diet.



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Herbs will sometimes have additional information listed in the supplement facts panel. You might see ratio numbers (i.e. 4:1) that designate how much raw material of the herb (fresh or dried herb) went into making the supplement version of the herb.

Herbs might have a standardization amount that corresponds to how much of an active ingredient is present in the herbal supplement. The dose of the active ingredient is often listed, but not always.

Proprietary blends are common in dietary supplements. Only the total amount of the proprietary blend in a serving needs to be listed on a supplement, which means that you don't get all of the information about every ingredient that is in the blend.

Ingredients in a proprietary blend are listed in order from most to least. This is similar to how food ingredients are listed on nutrition facts panels that you find on prepared foods.

The daily value percent is established against a 2,000 calorie diet. While this is the standard calorie amount across most labels, it's always important to scale your requirements based on the calorie intake that you need to reach your health goals.