

PRESCRIPTION FOR DANGER













Safe supplements can turn deadly when mixed with meds.

BY CARRIE ANTON

A LOT of regulation goes into making sure that the muscle-building supplements you take are safe. But according to the American Council on Science and Health, mixing otherwise safe meds and supplements can affect the rate of a drug's absorption, magnify its effects or counteract it entirely.

Based on the current evidence, these are some combinations of medications and supplements to watch out for, according to Maria Yaramus, PharmD, assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy and clinical specialist in dietary supplement counseling. To be safe, talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking any supplement or medication. **MF**

ADD IT UP

SUPPLEMENT	MEDICATION	INTERACTION
CREATINE Builds muscle, boosts energy and strength for workouts, helps with weight gain	 Immunosuppressants (Neoral and Sandimmune) and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)* like ibuprofen (Advil and Motrin) and naproxen (Aleve)	 Increases the risk of the drugs' harmful side effects, such as kidney damage or failure 
GINSENG Increases energy 	 Insulin and oral meds to manage diabetes (Avandia, Glucophage and Micronase)	 May enhance the lowering of blood glucose levels, causing hypoglycemia (low blood sugar with a range of effects, from jitters to coma)
DHEA Increases metabolism and sex hormone levels, and promotes muscle gain	 Treatments for allergies (Allegra), reflux (Prevacid), depression and anxiety (Xanax), and high blood pressure (Baycol)	 These drugs are broken down in the liver, and DHEA can slow the rate at which medication is cleared from the body, potentially increasing their effects.
WHEY PROTEIN Increases lean muscle mass and helps with immune function and weight loss 	 Antibiotics like tetracycline (Panmycin, Brodspec and Tetracap) or quinolone (Cipro and Levaquin) that treat acne and infections of the urinary and upper respiratory tracts	 Interferes with the absorption of medication through the digestive system, making it less effective. 

INGREDIENT DICTIONARY

What's that mystery item in your supplements?

Mal•to•dex•trin *n.*, a complex carbohydrate found in meal replacement powders, shakes, protein bars and vitamin and mineral tablets; it has a very high glycemic index rating, meaning that it causes a spike in blood sugar levels that may enhance the absorption of other nutrients in the supplement; also this may benefit your muscles right after a workout, though consuming at rest may cause fat storage.

DO I NEED TO TAKE IT?

Vitamin D

You definitely need vitamin D—it helps your body absorb calcium and prevents disease. And as a guy who trains, you'll be interested to know that a vitamin D deficiency could lead to muscle and bone pain. You need at least 1,000 IU a day, and a typical diet only gives you 250 to 300 IU, says William B. Grant, PhD, the researcher behind a study in *Alternative Medicine Review*. Sunlight helps your body make some vitamin D, so you should especially consider taking a supplement in the darker winter months, he says.

"During the winter it is difficult to impossible to make vitamin D, except in the southern states," says Grant. "I prefer the compressed white powder [tablets]," he says. "Look for D3, from animal sources, rather than D2, from vegetable sources. It's more effective. Also, vitamin A competes with D, so don't take them together." Do take D with food, along with calcium and magnesium.—Lisa Hannam



After: Cory Sorenson.
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 Ginseng: iStockphoto.com/Steve H.
 Campos/iStockphoto.
 Toxic: Steaks Eidlejus/iStockphoto.
 Pimples: Getty Images.
 Vitamin D: Jean Héguy.

* All drugs listed require a prescription, with the exception of NSAIDs, which are over-the-counter medications.