



## **Dietary Supplements**

For fun:

Draw lines and/or write numbers to make a match between food and country.

Taco	1. Italy	
Sausages		2. Japan
Chicken curry		3. China
Beijing duck		4. Mexico
Sushi		5. India
Pizza		6. Germany

### **Discussion points:**

What do you know about dietary supplements?

Have you ever taken any?

Do you think they can be bad for your health?

## Text

Vocabulary:

herb – any of various plants often used in medicine

claim – to say to be true, especially when it is open to question

essential – something basic, necessary

surgery – an operation or procedure, especially one involving the removal or replacement of a diseased organ or tissue.

over-the-counter medicine – can be sold legally without a doctor's prescription

FDA – Food and Drug Administration (US)

What are dietary supplements?

- Dietary supplements are products that people add to their diets. They include vitamins, minerals, herbs, and amino acids.
- They can be pills, liquids, or powders.
- By law, companies that make these products cannot claim they prevent, treat, or cure disease. For example, a product cannot claim that it can "cure cancer" or "help you lose weight."

Can dietary supplements be taken instead of eating certain foods? No.

- Don't take supplements instead of eating healthy foods.
- Some dietary supplements may help some people get enough essential nutrients to improve their diets and be in their best health.
- If you are having surgery, taking other supplements or medicines, or have health problems dietary supplements may be harmful.

Should I check with my doctor before using a supplement? Yes.

- Dietary supplements should not be used instead of prescription medicine.
- If you have health problems and take these products, you may put yourself at risk.
- Talk to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you:
  - are pregnant or nursing a baby
  - take other supplements or medicines
  - are having surgery
  - have diabetes
  - have high blood pressure
  - have any other health problems

Is it safe to take dietary supplements with other medicines?

- Always talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before you take any dietary supplement.
- These products may have risks. They could be harmful or life threatening if:
  - You are also taking other dietary supplements
  - You are also taking other prescription or over-the-counter medicines
  - You use them instead of medicine that your doctor prescribes

How are dietary supplements regulated?

Dietary Supplement regulations are similar to food regulations. This means:

- The FDA does not approve dietary supplements before they are sold.
- FDA can only take action against products that are not safe or products that make false claims after they are for sale.

Where can I learn more about a certain product?

- Call or write to the company that makes the product.
- Talk to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

<http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ByAudience/ForWomen/ucm118519.htm>

Task:

Choose the correct answer (there can be more than one):

1. In which case should you consult a doctor before taking dietary supplements?
  - a) you are pregnant
  - b) you have health problems
  - c) you have a dangerous job
2. Dietary supplements can be harmful if:
  - a) You're taking them instead of the medicine prescribed by the doctor
  - b) You're only taking one kind of dietary supplements
  - c) You're taking dietary supplements made in the US
3. Who can provide more information about the product?
  - a) Your doctor
  - b) Your insurance company
  - c) The producing company

### **Video:**

Vocabulary:

Generics – drugs not protected by a trademark

Sham – something false or empty

Contaminant – a substance which makes the drug impure, should not be added to it, for example, lead.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKyM8Dz8mec&feature=related>

Write down the problems with dietary supplements in the US. Can you tell more about them? Do you think there are the same problems in the Czech Republic?

Are all natural dietary supplements safe? Why or why not?