



Supplements to Keep a Healthy Spine

Herbal, Dietary, and Vitamin Supplements

People of all ages take supplements for the impressive, albeit disputed, array of health claims. Some supplements might even help manage your back and neck pain. But there's a lot we don't know about supplements. For some people, they are very beneficial. For others, they don't provide any benefits. Some supplements are perfectly safe, and others should be used with caution. And arguably the biggest question about supplements—how true are the health claims? Plus, given the many types of supplements—dietary, herbal, and vitamin—it's easy to get confused.

So let's start at the beginning. What are supplements? Supplements either contain a dietary ingredient that "supplements" your diet, or they serve a medicinal purpose. They are taken by mouth and come in a variety of forms—tablets, softgels, liquids, and powders, just to name a few.

Dietary Function

Each day, you need a certain amount of vitamins, minerals, and other nutritional substances to help your body function as it should. [Calcium and Vitamin D](#), for example, work together to maintain the health of your bones. If you eat a healthy, balanced diet, you likely consume sufficient amounts of these ingredients from your food. But if you don't, a supplement would help you reach your dietary goals. Many people take a daily multivitamin, for example, to ensure they're getting the right amount of nutrients.

Medicinal Function

Additionally, some supplements supposedly have a medicinal effect. In other words, some supplements may actually help treat symptoms. For instance, white willow bark, an herb, may help reduce inflammation. If aspirin upsets your stomach, white willow bark may be a suitable alternative. Another example is [chamomile](#), which is an herbal supplement that may help relieve insomnia.

An Important Note

Though supplements contain ingredients that are meant to enhance your health in some way, that doesn't mean they will. Supplements are not magic pills that will ward off back pain or any other ailment. Also, supplements are just that—*supplements*. They are not intended to replace a healthy diet. Just because you take a multivitamin does not ensure that you're getting all the nutrition you need. Though the health claims of supplements are widely disputed, they can be part of a healthy lifestyle. And a healthy lifestyle is among your top defenses against back and [neck pain](#).

Dr. John V. DeMaio, D.C., C.C.N.

Dr. James Lindauer, D.C.

The Village at Waugh Chapel: 2654 Brandermill Blvd., Gambrills, MD 21054

PHONE: 410-721-2222 FAX: 410-721-2437

Maryland Science and Technology Center: 17000 Science Dr., Ste 204, Bowie, MD 20715

PHONE: 301-262-4545 FAX: 301-262-7922