

YOUR SUPPLEMENTS

Your favorite health food store has plenty of supplements. But trying to figure out which nutrient is the best—decoding them—can be tricky. Here is a codebook for three widely used and important supplemental ingredients.

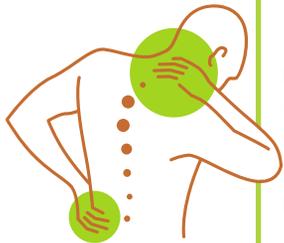
BOTANICAL:

Curcumin (from Turmeric)



WHERE IT COMES FROM:

Curcumin from the turmeric rhizome has been a primary herbal medicinal ingredient in India and East Asia for thousands of years.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

Curcumin combined with turmeric essential oil for enhanced bioavailability. Standard curcumin extracts can be difficult for the body to absorb.

WHAT IT IS:

Curcumin is the compound from turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) considered most responsible for its many healthy effects.

MAIN USES:

Curcumin has strong anti-inflammatory and antioxidant actions. One clinically studied, enhanced-bioavailable form of curcumin (BCM-95) has been shown to reduce arthritic and muscle pain, alleviate depression, inhibit fatty liver conditions, and may decrease inflammation associated with Alzheimer's.

TYPICAL DOSAGE LEVEL:

250 mg to 2000 mg daily.

VITAMIN:

Niacin



WHERE IT COMES FROM:

Food sources include beef, chicken, fish, turkey, legumes, and nuts.



MAIN USES:

Niacin lowers LDL (bad) cholesterol and triglyceride levels, boosts HDL (good) cholesterol, strengthens blood vessels, and may protect the skin against UV damage. It is a key nutrient for nerve signals, brain cell development, and it preserves DNA and cell integrity throughout the body.



TYPICAL DOSAGE LEVEL:

25 mg to 50 mg daily.

WHAT IT IS:

Niacin is a B vitamin, also known as vitamin B3.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

Niacin and niacinamide are two popular forms. Inositol hexaniacinate (or inositol hexanicotinate) is known as a “flush free” niacin and provides the nutrient without the “flushing” sensation that standard forms can cause on an empty stomach. However, studies showing the efficacy of flush-free niacin are mixed. To ensure you're getting all of niacin's benefits, consider choosing a standard niacin supplement. You can reduce flushing by taking the niacin with food and/or a dose (870 mg) of stinging nettles.

MINERAL:

Sodium



WHERE IT COMES FROM:

Natural food sources of sodium include beets, milk, and celery. There are higher levels of sodium in processed foods, but that is not a recommended source.



MAIN USES:

Supplemental sodium is a favorite with long-distance runners, professional athletes, and anyone who works in hot conditions. It helps maintain electrolytes, improve muscle and nerve signals, inhibit muscle cramps, and prevent dehydration. Individuals following a keto or other low-carb diet can also use sodium supplements to replenish electrolyte balance as the body adapts to reduced carbohydrate intake.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

Sodium chloride and/or sodium phosphate, which are often combined with other minerals such as magnesium and potassium.



TYPICAL DOSAGE LEVEL:

200 mg to 400 mg for those with intensive workouts or physically demanding jobs. Individuals on a keto diet may require to 7 g of sodium daily.