

NPA Responds to Consumer Reports Study

You may have seen coverage in the news today regarding a recent study released by Consumer Reports regarding the safety of dietary supplements and natural products. NPA has been quick to respond to inquiries and is working with the trade and national media to highlight the key initiatives we as an association are implementing in order to keep consumers safe by promoting compliance and transparency in the industry as well as pointing out the flaws in the study.

NPA is working to promote its TruLabel program, which as you know, is strengthening its standards and on its way to becoming a requirement for membership in our organization. We are also bringing attention to our recently launched warning label program, a beneficial new membership tool that will benefit not only the industry but the millions of consumers who use our products.

The following is the NPA's (National Products Association) Response to the recent Consumer Report.

Consumer Reports Talking Points

Topline Messages

- According to a Gallup survey, cited in the Consumer Reports article, 94 percent of physicians now recommend vitamins or minerals to some of their patients; 45 percent have recommended herbals supplements.
- The article states that you can get all you need from food but too many Americans don't get the nutrition they need, especially kids. Here's another example of that today from a study released in the Washington Post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/07/26/while-the-rest-of-the-world-got-taller-americans-plateaued-heres-why/>
- There's a strong body of evidence that supplements can help improve a healthy lifestyle IF ACCOMPANIED by diet and exercise. They are PART of a healthy lifestyle. Everyday new research is published that shows the positive effects dietary supplements can have on health and wellness. Government run websites like www.clinicaltrials.gov show the thousands of research studies currently ongoing with supplements.
- Supplements ARE regulated. They are regulated as a category of food and have very thorough and specific regulatory requirements on claims and new ingredients, in addition to the general requirements for foods like sanitation and facility registration. Other requirements like current good manufacturing practices (cGMPs) and Serious Adverse Event Reporting (SAERs) are the same or in some cases more involved than the requirements for pharmaceuticals. This information can easily be found on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) website, www.fda.gov/dietarysupplements/ . Supplements are currently the only commodity of food to require mandatory reporting for SAERs.
- While The FDA regulates safety, quality in manufacturing, and labeling of supplements, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) also has oversight on the industry by having primary responsibility for regulating the advertising of these products.
- Everyone should always, always, always consult with their doctor or health care professional before considering supplements.
- Millions of Americans use them safely every day because they are satisfied with them, and they WANT natural products – that's why our industry is growing. If people didn't think they worked, they wouldn't use them. But there is satisfaction because people are tired of oil in their makeup, tired of processed everything.
- FDA has acknowledged several dietary ingredients and food components derived from dietary ingredients in reducing the risk of various diseases. These health claims are printed in Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations for having met FDA's Significant Scientific Agreement, which is based upon evidence from at least two randomized, controlled clinical trials (RCTs).
- SAERs to the Food and Drug Administration show that dietary supplements have an excellent safety record, especially when compared to pharmaceuticals, over-the-counter drugs and incidence of hospitalization from foodborne illness. The figure given of 23,000 ER visits due to dietary supplements is based on a mathematical estimate not an actual number of SAERs from the FDA.
- For years, the Natural Products Association has called for full implementation of cGMP regulations and pushed for more resources, more funding and more enforcement of existing regulations.
- The Natural Products Association has long supported government efforts to crack down on illegal drugs being marketed as dietary supplements.
- Dietary supplements are used by half of all Americans to promote their health. While consumers should check with their doctor before taking dietary supplements, they should rest assured that dietary supplements are both safe and well-regulated by the government.

NPA Membership

Along with speaking to a doctor, consumers have other options to learn more about supplements through NPA and NPA members:

- o The recent launch of NPA's warning letter database is also a major step for transparency and in maintaining the high quality and safety standards of nutritional supplements Americans expect and deserve. Its programs like these that give consumers and health care professionals the powerful tools to decide the best way to improve wellness and quality of life for themselves or their patients.
- o The Natural Products Association recently launched a collaborative program with Underwriters Laboratories to provide additional training to manufacturers and a logo for those who have completed UL certification, giving consumers additional confidence that their vitamins and supplements are safe.

To keep informed and updated about your rights as a Natural Foods Consumer and the various attacks on our industry, go to: <http://www.npainfo.org>