

The Supplement Label Checklist

For anyone standing in the aisle unsure whether a tub was ever tested, who wants a fast way to tell a real certification from a marketing phrase. Every line below restates a claim verified against Tier-1 medical sources. Nothing here is invented.

✓ CHECKED AGAINST HARVARD HEALTH · NIH OFFICE OF DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

1

Supplements are not FDA approved

Harvard notes the FDA leaves purity and safety to the companies and rarely penalizes them. The seal is often the only real signal. (Harvard Health)

2

Labels can be wildly off

Harvard cites research finding melatonin gummies with up to 347% more than the label stated, some with undeclared CBD. (Harvard Health)

3

A few certifiers are credible

Harvard notes the Department of Defense recognizes a short list, including NSF Certified for Sport and USP. (Harvard Health)

1. Look for a recognized third-party seal

Not every seal means something.

WHY THIS WORKS

Harvard notes most seals of approval are meaningless, but the Department of Defense has identified credible certifiers including NSF Certified for Sport and USP. These independently verify what is in the product, so the seal, not the marketing copy, is the signal to trust.

SOURCE: HARVARD HEALTH

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Look for NSF Certified for Sport or USP Verified
- ☐ Treat a bare lab tested claim as marketing
- ☐ Check the seal is a named third party
- ☐ Ignore vague quality or purity slogans

2. Know what the seal actually checks

Batch testing, label match, contaminants.

WHY THIS WORKS

The NIH advises anyone using sport or performance supplements to look for independent third-party certification because the label alone is not a guarantee. NSF Certified for Sport verifies the contents match the label, screens for banned substances, and checks for unsafe contaminants.

SOURCE: NIH OFFICE OF DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Confirm it verifies label accuracy
- ☐ Prefer programs that test every batch
- ☐ Check it screens for banned substances
- ☐ Favor certifiers that publish their results

3. Prioritize verification for daily products

Choose your battles by exposure.

WHY THIS WORKS

An occasional supplement carries less cumulative risk than one you take every day. A protein powder scooped once or twice daily is exactly where verified purity is worth prioritizing. If you are choosy about one supplement, make it the one you use most.

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Prioritize a seal on daily-use products
- ☐ Spend a little more for certainty on staples
- ☐ Be extra cautious with anything you take often
- ☐ Reassess anything without a real seal

4. Keep food first, powder for the gap

A powder fills gaps, it does not replace meals.

WHY THIS WORKS

Cleveland Clinic puts a typical daily protein target at about 1.2 to 1.6 grams per kilogram of body weight, most of it from food. A verified powder is a convenient way to close the gap on days food falls short, not a foundation on its own.

SOURCE: CLEVELAND CLINIC

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Aim for your daily protein target from meals
- ☐ Use a verified powder to fill gaps only
- ☐ Judge it on convenience and how you feel
- ☐ Do not treat a shake as a meal replacement

EVERY CLAIM ABOVE, TRACED TO ITS SOURCE

Harvard Health, Start Vetting Your Supplements · <https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthy-aging-and-longevity/start-vetting-your-supplements>

NIH Office of Dietary Supplements, Exercise and Athletic Performance · <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/ExerciseAndAthleticPerformance-Consumer/>

Cleveland Clinic, How Much Protein Should I Eat a Day? · <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/how-much-protein-you-need>

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