

## **Dietary Supplement Safety**

Dietary supplements have an excellent safety record, especially compared with other consumer goods, such as drugs and even other foods. Below are a few statistics that support this claim.

The truth is that dietary supplements are far safer than most common foods and drugs that consumers use without a second thought. For instance, it may surprise you that ibuprofen, one of the most common pain relievers, is responsible for more than 17,000 deaths annually [New England Journal of Medicine].

Prescription drugs, for all the testing they go through and copious usage directions that are issued with them, are estimated to be one of the top five leading causes of death in the U.S. at more than 106,000 annually [Journal of the American Medical Association].

More than 5,000 Americans are killed each year by food borne illnesses [U.S. Centers for Disease Control].

One reason there is so much fear mongering about supplements is because few experts can agree on accurate sources for statistical information about their safety. But even when trusted sources, such as the FDA or the American Association of Poison Control Centers, do issue statistics on adverse reactions connected with supplements, they are usually dismissed as being unrealistically low.

In 2001, the FDA received 1,214 reports of adverse events regarding dietary supplements. That same year, it received more than 300,000 adverse reports about drugs. So, supplements represent less than half-of-one percent of drug adverse events using FDA data.

Is the higher safety profile for dietary supplements unique to the FDA's data? No. According to reports from poison control centers throughout the United States, adverse reactions to drugs are more than 800 percent higher than those to dietary supplements [American Association of Poison Control Centers]