

WEIGHT LOSS SUPPLEMENTS - HYPE OR HELP?

Approximately 50 million Americans go on a diet each year. Many of those trying to lose weight are seeking a “magic bullet” that will help them take the pounds off quickly. Whether looking online or buying over-the-counter, the number of available weight loss pills and potions is endless. But have any of them been proven safe and effective?

Following is a review of four products you may have heard some “hype” about:

1. GREEN COFFEE BEAN EXTRACT

What is it? It is made from coffee beans that have not been roasted. The active ingredient, chlorogenic acid, is higher in green, unroasted beans.

Is it effective? It is possibly effective. However, studies are preliminary, short-term and poor quality.

Is it safe? It appears to be safe based on limited research. Green coffee beans contain caffeine similar to regular coffee.

Comments: If you decide to try green coffee bean extract, do your homework and purchase a brand with at least 45% chlorogenic acid.



2. RASPBERRY KETONE

What is it? It is a chemical from red raspberries thought to help weight loss by causing fat to be broken down more effectively.

Is it effective? There is insufficient evidence to rate its effectiveness. Thus far, Raspberry ketone has only been studied in animals and not humans.

Is it safe? There isn't enough information available to know. There is some concern because raspberry ketone is chemically related to a stimulant, synephrine, which may cause jitteriness, elevated blood pressure or rapid heart beat.



3. **GLUCOMANNAN** (Konjac Root Fiber)

What is it? It is a sugar made from the root of the konjac plant. The high fiber content of glucomannan is thought to curb hunger and help with weight loss.

Is it effective? There is insufficient evidence to rate effectiveness for weight loss.

Is it safe? Glucomannan powder in foods is likely safe, capsules and powder supplements are possibly safe, but solid tablets are possibly unsafe as they may cause blockages in throat or intestines.



Comment: Some manufacturers recommend taking two or three capsules before each meal and follow a 1000 calorie diet. The ½-1 pound per day weight loss that is promised is neither realistic nor safe.

4. **CHITOSAN**

What is it? It is a sugar from the hard skeleton of shellfish. Claims are made that it will reduce fat absorption and promote weight loss.

Is it effective? There is insufficient evidence to rate effectiveness.

Is it safe? It is possibly safe for most people when taken by mouth. It may cause stomach upset, bloating or gas.

Comments: Studies have shown that weight loss only occurs when chitosan supplements are combined with a low calorie diet.

If you are considering a weight loss supplement, be sure to talk with your doctor, especially if you have health problems or take any prescription drugs.

The reality is that many supplements are more hype than help. Keep in mind that even if you take a supplement, you will still need to cut your calorie intake in order to lose weight.

Reference: Natural Medicine Comprehensive Database

www.naturaldatabase.therapeuticresearch.com –accessed 1/28/13

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