

## Published study finds usage of, recommendations for dietary supplements high among dietitians

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Registered dietitians are one of several groups of healthcare professionals who report using dietary supplements as part of their health regimen, according to a newly published study in *Nutrition Journal*, a peer-reviewed, online journal that focuses on the field of human nutrition. According to data from the 2009 "Life...supplemented" Healthcare Professionals (HCP) Impact Study, 74 percent of dietitians use dietary supplements regularly while 22 percent reported using them occasionally or seasonally. The data also indicated that an overwhelming percentage of dietitians, 97 percent, recommend dietary supplements to their clients.

"Dietitians are uniquely qualified to evaluate the adequacy of nutrient intake and to make rational choices about dietary supplement use for themselves and for their clients or patients, when appropriate," stated the study's authors.

Usage of a multivitamin was high amongst dietitians, with 84 percent of those surveyed indicating they had used a multivitamin within the past year. Looking at specialty supplement usage, omega-3 or fish oil supplements (47 percent), probiotics (24 percent), fiber (22 percent) and green tea supplements (18 percent) were cited by considerable proportions of surveyed dietitians. Several individual vitamins and minerals, including calcium (63 percent), vitamins D (43 percent), C (29 percent) and B (23 percent), were also reported to be used.

When asked why they choose to use dietary supplements, the top three reasons cited by dietitians who take them were bone health (58 percent), overall health and wellness benefits (53 percent), and to fill nutrient gaps in the diet (42 percent). Interestingly, the top three reasons that dietitians were most likely to recommend dietary supplements to clients were also bone health (72 percent), filling nutrient gaps (69 percent), and overall health and wellness (50 percent). Other top reasons for recommending supplements included lowering cholesterol (48 percent), heart health (47 percent), dietary pattern/vegetarian/vegan (45 percent) and digestive and gastrointestinal health (41 percent).

Also noteworthy, the study found that dietitians were very likely to report engaging in other healthy habits including trying to eat a balanced diet (96 percent), managing stress (92 percent), visiting their own healthcare professional regularly (86 percent), exercising regularly (83 percent), maintaining a healthy weight (80 percent) and regularly getting a good night's sleep (72 percent). Moreover, only 24 percent said they often consumed large amounts of caffeine and only three percent smoked or consumed large quantities of alcohol.

This study is the latest to explore the use of dietary supplements by [healthcare professionals](#). Like previous studies, it adds to the growing body of evidence that suggests healthcare professionals commonly use dietary supplements. Last year, *Nutrition Journal* published findings from a separate 2008 study from "Life...supplemented" that found that for physician specialists—specifically dermatologists, cardiologists and orthopedists—personal usage of and patient recommendations for dietary supplements is quite common. In 2009, *Nutrition Journal* published findings from a separate 2007 "Life...supplemented" study that found that physicians and nurses are as likely as members of the general public to use [dietary supplements](#) and that most physicians and nurses recommend supplements to their patients.

The published article reporting on the study findings was co-authored by Annette Dickinson, Ph.D., consultant to and past president of the Council for Responsible Nutrition; Leslie Bonci, M.P.H., R.D., CSSD, LDN, director of sports nutrition, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and consultant to the "Life...supplemented" consumer wellness education program; Nicolas Boyon, senior vice president, Ipsos Public Affairs, and Julio Franco, senior research manager, Ipsos Public Affairs. Ipsos [Public Affairs](#) conducted the "Life...supplemented" HCP Impact Study on behalf of CRN.

Provided by Council for Responsible Nutrition

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