

CRN assesses current state of scientific research for nutritional supplements

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The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN), the dietary supplement industry's leading trade association, today released its comprehensive report, *The Benefits of Nutritional Supplements* (4th Edition). The updated book, which assesses the current state of the science on the health benefits associated with select nutritional supplements, finds consistent and adequate use of these products contributes to overall health and wellness throughout all age groups, lifestyles, and life stages.

Specifically, the report addresses the current state of the science regarding multivitamins and other supplements, including antioxidants (vitamins C and E), [calcium](#), long chain [omega-3 fatty acids](#) (fish oils), [vitamin D](#), vitamins B-6 and B-12, fiber and folic acid. It includes studies that demonstrate benefit as well as studies with null results and also addresses studies that purport to have found harm. It discusses who needs [dietary supplements](#) (nearly everyone), who takes dietary supplements (most everyone), and who recommends dietary supplements—the majority of many physician specialists (primary care physicians, OB/GYNs, cardiologists, dermatologists, and orthopedists), as well as other health professionals (nurses, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, and registered dietitians).

"In updating the fourth edition of the report, we highlighted current research demonstrating the [health benefits](#) provided by consistent use of many of these nutrients. We assessed not only the studies with favorable outcomes, but also those studies with 'null' or 'negative' findings, to paint a thorough picture of the state of the science surrounding these

nutrients," said the report's author, Annette Dickinson, Ph.D., past president and current consultant for CRN. "And because we evaluate relevant scientific studies throughout the report, it was essential for us also to delve into the current debate over nutrient benefits—what is working, what could be improved, and what many experts in the field suggest."

The updated report also reviews issues surrounding supplements and mortality, as well as the importance of select nutrients during key life stages, including during pregnancy and throughout the aging process. It reminds readers that even the most conscientious consumers find it difficult to get all the nutrients they need from food alone—and taking supplements is an effective and affordable way to fill a number of known nutrient gaps and help maintain overall good health.

"What is so important about this book is that instead of looking at individual studies, one at a time, and asking consumers to make decisions based on what often is a flip-flop of results, this book tracks the research so that individual studies can be placed in an overall context, more effectively reflecting the overall state of the science," said CRN President & CEO Steve Mister, who wrote the introduction to the book. "Science is complex and constantly evolving, at times in unpredictable ways. The book addresses that evolution."

Dr. Dickinson, an expert on vitamins, minerals, and other supplements, has worked in the nutrition field for more than four decades. In 1995, President Clinton appointed Dr. Dickinson to the Commission on Dietary Supplement Labels, and in 2002 she was named to a three-year term on the Food Advisory Committee of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). She began working for CRN in 1973, primarily responsible for scientific and regulatory affairs, then serving as CRN's president from 2002-2005. She currently consults for CRN and other clients on nutrition issues, and is also an adjunct professor in the

Department of Food Science and Nutrition at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Dickinson has authored numerous papers and frequently speaks on the topic of dietary [supplements](#) to policy-making, scientific and other audiences. The first edition of *The Benefits of [Nutritional Supplements](#)* was published in 1987.

Provided by Council for Responsible Nutrition

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