

Steer clear of dietary supplements for concussions: FDA

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Agency warns that no evidence supports claims of faster recovery from a head injury.

(HealthDay)— As the fall sports season starts and young players face the risk of concussions, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration warns that dietary supplements that claim to prevent, treat or cure concussions are untested, unproven and possibly dangerous.

These products are being sold on the Internet and in stores by companies attempting to exploit parents' increasing concerns about concussions, the agency said in a news release.

These bogus supplements are also being marketed through social media, the FDA added.

One common misleading claim is that these dietary supplements promote faster brain healing after a [concussion](#). Even if some of these products don't contain harmful ingredients, the claim itself can be dangerous, explained Gary Coody, National Health Fraud Coordinator at the FDA.

"We're very concerned that false assurances of faster recovery will convince athletes of all ages, coaches and even parents that someone suffering from a concussion is ready to resume activities before they are really ready," he said in the news release.

"Also, watch for claims that these products can prevent or lessen the severity of concussions or [traumatic brain injuries]," he added.

Head injuries require proper diagnosis, treatment and monitoring by a medical professional, the FDA stressed. There is mounting evidence that if concussion patients resume playing sports too soon, they're at increased risk for another concussion.

Repeat concussions can lead to severe problems such as brain swelling, permanent brain damage, long-term disability and death.

"There is simply no scientific evidence to support the use of any dietary supplement for the prevention of concussions or the reduction of post-concussion symptoms that would allow athletes to return to play sooner," Charlotte Christin, acting director of the FDA's division of dietary supplement programs, said in the news release.

Many dietary supplements that claim to benefit people with concussion and other [head injuries](#) hype the benefits of ingredients such as the spice turmeric and high levels of [omega-3 fatty acids](#) from fish oils, the FDA said.

Two companies making false claims about their products changed their websites and labeling after the FDA sent them warning letters in 2012. The FDA issued a warning letter in 2013 to a third company that was doing the same.

"As we continue to work on this problem, we can't guarantee you won't see a claim about [traumatic brain injuries]," Coody said. "But we can promise you this: There is no [dietary supplement](#) that has been shown to prevent or treat them. If someone tells you otherwise, walk away."

More information: [More Information](#)

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