

# Common supplement ingredient could harm fetus, FDA warns

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(HealthDay)—Vinpocetine, a compound found in many dietary

supplements, may pose a risk to women of childbearing age, U.S. health officials warn.

A review by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration found that vinpocetine may cause a miscarriage or harm a developing fetus.

"We're advising pregnant women and women who could become pregnant not to take vinpocetine," FDA Deputy Commissioner Dr. Amy Abernethy said in an agency news release. "We are also advising firms marketing dietary supplements containing vinpocetine to evaluate their product labeling to ensure that it provides [safety warnings](#) against use by pregnant women and women who could become pregnant."

Vinpocetine is a man-made compound used in some products sold as [dietary supplements](#), either alone or combined with other ingredients. It may appear on labels as Vinca minor extract, lesser periwinkle extract or common periwinkle extract, the FDA said.

Supplements that contain vinpocetine claim to enhance memory, focus or mental acuity. They are also touted to increase energy and aid weight loss, the FDA noted.

The agency is asking companies that make supplements containing vinpocetine to ensure they warn against use by [pregnant women](#) and women who could become pregnant.

In some countries, vinpocetine is treated as a prescription drug. In the United States, however, supplements containing the compound have not been reviewed by the FDA. Thus, neither the safety and effectiveness nor the label claims for these supplements are approved, the agency said.

**More information:** Visit the U.S. National Institutes of Health for more on [dietary supplements](#).

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