

**SUPPLEMENTS**

*Put to the Test*

Although makers of vitamins, herbal remedies, and other dietary supplements don't have to prove their products work, they will now have to verify what's in the pills.

**Ingredient testing to be phased in**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is phasing in a long-awaited rule requiring supplement makers to test their ingredients.

The move comes after the agency found undeclared active ingredients in some supplements. Previously, regulators have also found supplements that fell short of the amount of vitamins claimed on the label.

**Raising the bar**

A spokesman for the \$22 billion supplement industry said that most companies already test their ingredients, and that the FDA rule will "raise the bar so that all have to comply."

Compliance won't be required, however, for as long as three years for the smallest manufacturers. And even large companies have until June 2008 to get with the program.

The new rule was authorized by the 2004 Dietary Supplement Health & Education Act, which limited the FDA's oversight of the supplement industry.



Get **CALCIUM**  
from **FOOD** for  
**STRONG** Bones

Women who want to beat osteoporosis are better off looking for help in the dairy case than on the vitamin shelf.

This is the finding of a new study that shows that women who get most of their daily calcium from dietary sources have stronger bones than those whose calcium comes mostly from supplements—even when the pill poppers consumed more milligrams per day.

**A study of women's diets**

Researchers at the University of Washington asked 183 women to record their diet and supplement intakes. They then divided

the women into three groups:

- Those who got at least 70 percent of their daily calcium from pills
- Those who got at least 70 percent from their diet
- A diet-plus-supplement group whose calcium source percentages fell somewhere between those ranges

**What the researchers learned**

Women in the diet-plus-supplement group took in the most calcium, while the women who relied mostly on pills got somewhat less. The women who relied primarily on dietary calcium—

mainly through dairy products—took in the least calcium.

But when researchers tested the women's bone mineral density, they found:

- The diet-plus-supplement group had the highest bone density.
- Women in the "diet-only" group, who took in the least amount of calcium, were a close second.
- Women who got most of their calcium from supplements trailed behind the others in bone density.

**Get calcium from food**

"Based on our results, it might be beneficial if doctors tell their patients to use dairy sources as calcium sources," says Reina Armamento-Villareal, M.D., lead author of the study.

"But more important, they should emphasize to their patients they should get adequate calcium, and if they cannot get it from their diet, they should at least get it from supplements."

**How you can get calcium into your diet**

Dairy foods are an excellent source of calcium, as is calcium-fortified orange juice.

Dark leafy vegetables are also a good source, but it is not as readily absorbed as calcium from dairy products.

