Snake Oil?

Scientific evidence for popular health supplements
Showing tangible human health benefits when taken orally by an adult with a healthy diet

Popularity (Google hits)

One To Watch (Few studies but promising results)

EVIDENCE

STRONG

folic acid — certain birth defects
fish oil/ omega 3 — heart disease
garlic — blood pressure
melatonin — insomnia
niacin (vitamin B3) — heart disease
vitamin D — general health, all cause mortality
zinc — colds
dark chocolate — blood pressure
green tea — cholesterol

GOOD

calcium+ vitamin D — breast cancer
omega 6 — heart health
bone health
tyrosine — alertness, wakefulness, memory
anti-oxidants — infertility in men
CoQ10 — blood pressure
colorectal cancer
olive leaf extract — blood pressure, cholesterol
vitamin K2 — bone health
devil's claw — arthritis
cancer symptoms
hawthorn — blood pressure
NAC — mental health
peppermint oil — IBS
rhodiola rosea L. — fatigue

PROMISING

creatine — cognition

WORTH IT LINE

calcium — osteoporosis
depression, mental illness
honey — coughs in children
red yeast rice — cholesterol, heart disease
nettle — urinary
vitamin B8 — OCD
echinacea — colds
ginger — nausea
magnesium — blood pressure
krill oil — PMS
L-lysine — herpes
magnesium +vitamin B6 — ADHD
probiotics — IBS*
valerian — insomnia
aloe vera — diabetes
colorectal cancer
osteoporosis

CONFLICTING

cinnamon — type 2 diabetes
feverfew — migraine
GABA — stress, ADHD, cancer
iron — child development
diarrhoea, gastrointestinal, respiratory infections
St John's Wort — depression
coconut oil — obesity, cholesterol
cranberry juice — urinary infections
migraine
child intelligence
horse chestnut seed extract
lavender — depression
MSM
spirulina — blood pressure
bromelain — arthritis
ginseng — cognitive performance
milk thistle — hepatitis
black tea — heart disease, stress
borage seed oil
selenium
taurine
vitamin C — colds
andro-graphis
elderberry — cholesterol
glucosamine
L-arginine
L-carnitine
poly-phenols
cancer
DHEA
heart disease
hyaluronic acid
diabetes
athletic performance
quercetin
tryptophan / 5-HTP
cancer
vitamin B2
prostate cancer
anxiety
black cohosh
astax-anthin
chromium
lingzhi+ san miao san
gingko biloba
lutein
depression, mood disorders
ubiquinol
xylitol
B vitamins
heart disease
ageing
bitter orange
omega 3: ALA — cancer
flaxseed oil
resveratrol
turmeric (curcumin) — peptic ulcer
diabetes
vitamin A: retinol — birth defects
beta-glucans
bitter melon
evening primrose oil
Alzheimer's dementia
cancer
goji (wolfberry)
cancer
saw palmetto
vitamin B5
vitamin B1
collagen
chamomile
Chrohn's disease, asthma, diabetes
wheat-grass
cat's claw
methionine
omega 6
papain
pau darco
trypsin
uva ursi
fenugreek
isoflavones
pancreatin
vanadium
silicic acid
slippery elm
vitamin A: beta-carotene — cancer
prickly pear
cholesterol, blood pressure
palm oil
rosehip
grapefruit seed extract
lycopene
omega 9
sleep, relaxation
grape seed extract
noni
potassium
royal jelly
heart disease
vitamin E

SLIGHT

NONE

acai

EVIDENCE

mortality
copper
diabetes

David McCandless // v2.0 // Oct 2010 //
InformationIsBeautiful.net

source: Pubmed, Cochrane.org - http://bit.ly/Snakeoil
Only human, randomised placebo-controlled trials used
Complete source & interactive version: informationsisbeautiful.net/2012/snake-oil-supplements