



Liquids vs. Pills

PROS AND CONS OF EACH SUPPLEMENT

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Searching for supplements can be a daunting task with the overwhelming number of products available and their accompanying claims. When it comes to health though, it's vital to research the differences among the supplements in order to make wise, informed decisions. Nutrients are able to get into the bloodstream several ways including injection, through the skin, and by suppositories; however, the most common method is ingestion — by either liquid or pills/capsules. But there are other aspects to consider including ease of swallowing, rate of absorption, bioavailability, purity, and shelf life. Thus, a common question arises when deciding on supplements: Which is better, liquids or pills?

LIQUID PROSPro: Ease of swallowing. For people who have difficulty swallowing pills, elderly and young children for instance, liquids have an advantage because some pills are simply too large to comfortably swallow.

Pro: Rate of absorption. Generally, supplements in liquid form are much more readily broken down, and completely and quickly absorbed in the body. The Physician's Desk Reference states that 85 percent to 90 percent of nutrients in liquid supplements are absorbed in 22 seconds to 30 seconds.¹

Pro: One product. Liquids are more suitable for combining many different nutrients into one complete product — making it easier for your body to obtain the nutrients it needs.

LIQUID CONSCon: Synthetic chemical nutrients. Certain liquids contain synthetic chemical nutrients. Synthetic chemical nutrients are simply ingredients that do not occur in foods naturally. They are formulated in a lab, and do not contain the same molecular structures that occur in nature. Many of these synthetics are made from coal tar and can cause drug-like reactions in the body, such as acetates and oxides.

Con: Shelf life. While there are many liquid multivitamins that are stable and can hold their potency for years if combined and processed properly, generally liquid supplements have a shorter expiration date than pills or capsules.

Con: Different way of doing things. Particular liquids have different ways of doing things that may seem out of the ordinary. Many require refrigeration or storage in an environment that is not too hot or too cold — making them less portable. If liquids are stored improperly, their potency is jeopardized.

PILL PROSPro: Quality. Large variations in quality exist, and some companies put much effort into their pill and capsule forms. These nutraceuticals are manufactured with great care and use very expensive, all-natural, potent ingredients and excipients.

Pro: Excipients. Some supplements have highly sophisticated delivery systems called excipients. Excipients and enteric coatings delay breakdown in the stomach allowing most absorption to occur in the upper intestine where the supplement can do the most good.

Pro: Shelf life. Pills tend to have a long shelf life, and distributing sources can hold onto supplies longer.

PILL CONSCon: Rate of absorption. It has been demonstrated that only 10 percent to 20 percent of the nutrients in pills actually are absorbed. The National Advisory Board states that 100 milligrams consumed in tablet form translates into a concentration of only 8.3 milligrams or 8.3 percent in the blood.²

Con: Binding agents. Binding agents are chemicals used to keep pill ingredients "together" and therefore can prevent pills from breaking down completely. Binders and fillers, such as dibasic calcium phosphate (DCP) and microcrystalline cellulose (MCC), used in certain supplements cannot be broken down by the body, so they may pass right through along with the beneficial nutrients.³

Con: Megadoses. Some pills and capsules may be lacking in vitamins and minerals, fruit and vegetable extracts, omega 3 fatty acids, CoQ10, plant enzymes, organic trace minerals and microcomplexes, antioxidant blends, or herbal adaptogens. Therefore, in order to get complete nutrition, megadoses of many different pills may be necessary — which can lead to toxicity and an overburden on the digestive system, kidneys, and liver.

The beneficial effect of vitamins and minerals depends greatly on the right balance, combinations, and proportions of nutrients.

When making the choice of the best nutritional supplements, look for organically complexed (carbon bound) supplements derived from whole foods, minimally processed, and made from the highest-quality ingredients.

Good health is ultimately worth the investment.

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References¹ [ITAL]Physician's Desk Reference[/ITAL] (page 1542, #49).² PH Bennett, S Haffner, BL Kasiske, WF Keane, CE, National Advisory Board, - Am J Kidney Dis, 1995.³ Revue/Journal Title "The effects of slugging and recompression on pharmaceutical excipients" [ITAL]International Journal of Pharmaceutics[/ITAL] ISSN 0378-5173 CODEN IJPHDE Source/Source 1995, vol. 115, no1, pp. 35-43 (9 ref.).