

Drugs in the News 8/11/09 – Reliable Drug Information: The NLMs Dietary Supplements Labels Database

The US National Library of Medicine (NLM) Dietary Supplements Labels Database provides information about label ingredients in more than 3,000 selected brands of dietary supplements for free. Users can compare label ingredients in different brands. Information is also provided on the "structure/function" claims made by manufacturers. These claims by manufacturers have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Companies may not market as dietary supplements any products that are intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

Ingredients of dietary supplements in this database are linked to other NLM databases such as MedlinePlus and PubMed to allow users to understand the characteristics of ingredients and view the results of research pertaining to them, including the following:

- Uses in humans
- Adverse effects
- Mechanism of action

The Database can be searched by brand names, uses noted on product labels, specific active ingredients, and manufacturers. Warnings and Recalls from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), related to specific ingredients and supplement brands have also been provided.

The link to the Dietary Supplements Labels Database is:
<http://dietarysupplements.nlm.nih.gov/dietary/index.jsp>.

The Center for Drug Information and Research (CDIR) has written about 2 other free high quality US government sponsored drug information databases in recent issues of the *Drug Information Letter*. These databases are DailyMed that contains almost 5,000 professional product labels for drugs marketed in the US. The other database is LactMed which contains peer reviewed information on drugs and lactation.

Past issues of the Drug Information Letter can be accessed on the CDIR Web site at <http://cdir.lecom.edu>.

Congress with the passage of Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act of 2007 and initiatives within the FDA is making more useful drug information available to the public and health professionals free of charge.

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