
Marketing Dictionary

Phrases often found on supplement labels and in advertising (Chapter 4). Each entry gives what the phrase really means, and the question to ask back.

“Supports...” (supports immunity, supports joints). In many countries this wording is allowed without showing that the product treats or prevents disease. Ask: what outcome does it change, measured how, in whom?

“Proprietary formula”, “proprietary blend”. Only the total weight is listed, not the dose of each ingredient. Ask: what’s the dose of each ingredient?

“Doctor-formulated”, “expert recommended”. No legal meaning; doesn’t tell you the product has been tested. Ask: has this product been tested, and where are the results?

“Natural”, “of natural origin”, “100% herbal”. No agreed definition, doesn’t mean safe, and doesn’t guarantee there are no pharmaceutical drugs mixed in (Chapters 3, 10). Ask: safe for whom, at what dose?

“Clinically studied ingredients”. The ingredients were studied, not the product; the studies may be small, use a different dose, or be negative. Ask: which study, how many people, what dose, what outcome, and who paid?

“Superior absorption”, “active form”, “high bioavailability”. Usually means higher blood levels, not better health outcomes. Ask: is there a study comparing health outcomes between the two forms?

“1000% of your daily value”. 100% is already enough for most people; more isn’t better, and can exceed the upper safe level once added up. Ask: how much am I already getting from food and other bottles?

“Detox”, “cleanse”, “liver detox”. The liver, kidneys, gut and lungs already do this; products rarely say what they remove. Ask: which toxin, by how much, measured with what test?

“Immune boosting”, “immune support”. The immune system needs balance, not a “boost”; no blended product has been shown to make people sick less often (Chapter 9). Ask: how many fewer days of illness, and in whom?

“Antioxidant”. Some high-dose antioxidant pills have caused harm in trials (Chapter 1). Ask: what benefit of being an antioxidant has actually been measured?

“No side effects”. Nothing that has an effect is completely free of side effects. Ask: which study tracked the side effects?

“Works like a drug”, “replaces medication”. In many countries supplements aren’t allowed to say this. If a label still does, that’s a bad sign (Chapter 3). Ask: why isn’t it licensed as a medicine?

“Pharmaceutical grade”, “premium”. No shared definition; only an independent quality seal tells you the contents match the label (Chapter 3). Ask: is there an independent quality seal?

“Lab tested”, “quality tested”. May be the manufacturer’s own testing. Ask: tested by whom, for what?

“Cellular rejuvenation”, “boosts NAD+”, “anti-aging”. Most of the evidence is in cells or mice (Chapter 11). Ask: which step from mouse to human has this promise reached?

“Brain support”, “memory booster”, “focus”. No over-the-counter product has been shown to improve memory in healthy people; some contain unapproved drugs (Chapters 10, 11). Ask: measured how, and over what time?

“Hormone balance”, “blood sugar support”, “heart support”. Wording that sits close to “treats disease” but usually has no trial measuring disease outcomes. Ask: should I see a doctor instead of buying this?

“Best-seller”, “trusted by millions”. Sales aren’t evidence. Ask: is there a trial against a placebo?

Five-star reviews, customer testimonials. People who feel better tend to write reviews; many problems get better on their own (Chapter 4). Ask: would this person have got better without it?

