

# SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

## Beware the supplements on TV

If you're home during the day and have spent much time with the television on, you've no doubt been inundated with advertising for supplements that promise to change your life. By the time you've heard those ads 30 times you can probably quote them word for word. And at some point you might even be tempted to just dial that number and place an order.

Don't do it.

Just because companies create slick ads that sound like they'll solve all your problems doesn't mean it's safe for you to use their products, especially if you take any prescription drugs or have a medical condition.

Supplements are not approved by the Food and Drug Administration. The FDA doesn't evaluate those types of products and doesn't conduct any trials to check their safety and recommended dosage. The supplement companies are required to tell you this in their advertising, but it's in all that tiny text at the bottom of the TV screen that's impossible to read.

Learn all you can about potential drug interactions. Go first to [drugs.com](https://www.drugs.com) and click on the Drug Interaction Checker. Type in the name of your drug. Then type in the name of whatever you're considering taking and see what it says. I tried this with one of my prescription drugs and added one of the frequently advertised products and it showed 11 potential drug interactions. There were also some possible uncomfortable side effects, even without the possible drug interactions.

Seniors are especially targeted by the manufacturers of those supplements, hoping we'll believe their slick claims if we see those ads often enough. It's a billion-dollar industry, and they want your money. Before you dial that number on the TV screen, dial your doctor's office and ask if the supplement is something you should have. Chances are they will say no.

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