



EXTENSION

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Be wary of fraudulent COVID-19 supplement claims

While many people are doing their part by social distancing in an effort to remain healthy and protect the community, there are others looking to make a quick buck. Those fraudulent marketers are popping up and promoting various products that claim to help prevent or treat COVID-19.

Fraudulent COVID-19 products can come in many varieties, including dietary supplements and other foods, as well as products claiming to be tests, drugs, medical devices, or vaccines. Don't fall for these claims. The FDA has been monitoring social media and internet sites to find fraudulent COVID-19 products and remove them from the marketplace.

As of mid-April there was not a FDA-approved vaccine to prevent COVID-19 or drugs to treat the disease, and experts said it will likely take many months to produce such products. The FDA is working with manufacturers, and several possibilities are being studied in clinical trials.

Unfortunately, some companies are trying to profit from this pandemic by selling fraudulent products, which ultimately could be dangerous to you and your family. It is important to realize the FDA regulates dietary supplements under a different set of regulations than those covering drugs. New drugs must be proven to be safe and effective and receive FDA approval before they can be marketed.

The products claiming to cure or prevent COVID-19 have not been evaluated by the FDA for safety and effectiveness and may be dangerous to you and your family. The FDA does not have the authority to review dietary supplements for safety and effectiveness before they are marketed. The FDA does, however, have the authority to take dietary supplements off the market if they are found to be unsafe or if the claims on the products are false and misleading.

Dietary ingredients include vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and herbs or botanicals, as well as other substances that can be used to supplement the diet. Dietary supplements are not intended to treat, diagnose, cure or alleviate the effects of diseases.

If you have a question about a product claiming to treat or cure COVID-19, check with your health care provider before buying it. Consumers who have a serious event with an FDA-regulated product can file a complaint with the FDA's Consumer Complaint Coordinators.

For additional information, contact Kristy Spalding, Beckham and Washita Counties' FCS Extension Educator, at 580-660-0592 or kristy.spalding@okstate.edu.

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