



U.S. PHARMACOPEIA
The Standard of QualitySM



Initiative educates medical professionals on how to help consumers select high-quality dietary supplements

Ongoing special collaboration including *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database*, *Pharmacist's Letter*, United States Pharmacopeia (USP), and *Consumer Reports*

March 14, 2007 – STOCKTON, CA - Consumers shopping in the dietary supplement aisle at the pharmacy or grocery store have a difficult challenge selecting products. Out of several hundred dietary supplements on the shelf, how do they know which are safe and effective? How do they know which reliably contain the ingredients listed on the label and are free of dangerous contaminants?

People are often surprised that when it comes to dietary supplements, there are none of these basic assurances. Unlike prescription drugs, dietary supplements don't have to be proven safe or effective before they are sold. Dietary supplements also don't have to meet the same high-quality manufacturing standards as conventional drugs.

Through an ongoing special collaboration, medical professionals are now given a tool to help consumers make informed decisions about selecting quality dietary supplements.

Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database, in collaboration with the United States Pharmacopeia (USP), has just released a new state-of-the-art joint educational course:

Confusion in the Supplement Aisle: How to Help Consumers Select Dietary Supplements

This special report leads medical professionals through a practical 3-step program to identify safe, effective, and high-quality dietary supplements.

The course utilizes the evidence-based Safety and Effectiveness Ratings of *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database* to identify which supplements are helpful, and which could be harmful.

It also shows medical professionals how to identify high-quality brand name dietary supplements by looking for the USP Verified Mark. Dietary supplements with the USP Verified Mark are assured to:

- Reliably contain the ingredients listed on the product label in declared strengths and amounts
- Break down and release ingredients in the body within a specified amount of time
- Not contain harmful levels of contaminants
- Have been manufactured using Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) as defined by USP.

High-quality brand name supplements that have received the USP Verified Mark are specially noted in *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database*. When searching *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database*, USP Verified products show the USP Verified Mark next to their listing.

Phil Gregory, PharmD, Editor, *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database* says, "Through this ongoing special collaboration and this new educational initiative, *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database* and USP are providing medical professionals with the knowledge and

tools needed to help consumers make informed, healthy, dietary supplement decisions.”

This new educational program will be made available to most of the nation’s community pharmacists through *Pharmacist’s Letter*. For information on providing this course to pharmacists see www.naturaldatabase.com, www.pharmacistsletter.com, or www.usp.org, or call 209-472-2244.

Consumers can also directly access information on safety, effectiveness, and quality of dietary supplements. In collaboration with *Consumer Reports*, the *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database CONSUMER Version*, featuring listings for *USP Verified* supplements, are provided directly to consumers who use ConsumerReportsMedicalGuide.org.

Therapeutic Research Center is an independent research and publishing organization that provides evidence-based information for physicians, pharmacists, and other medical professionals. Therapeutic Research publishes *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database*, *Pharmacist’s Letter*, *Prescriber’s Letter*, *Ident-A-Drug Reference*, and a variety of continuing medical education courses including live courses. Therapeutic Research accepts no advertising and provides objective information for subscribers. *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database* is the most used resource of its kind, providing the world’s largest collection of brand name dietary supplements along with scientific data on each ingredient. The *Database* is continuously updated with new data added daily. The resource also provides users with multiple tools such as the highly acclaimed *Natural Product Effectiveness Checker* and *Natural Product/Drug Interaction Checker*, as well as educational programs on using natural medicines. The programs provide fully accredited continuing education for pharmacists, physicians, dietitians, and other professionals. *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database* is available in book form, on the web, and in PDA formats.

USP-Advancing Public Health Since 1820

The United States Pharmacopeia (USP) is a nonprofit, nongovernmental, standards-setting organization that advances public health and improves patient safety by ensuring good pharmaceutical care. USP standards, which are recognized worldwide, are developed through a unique process of public involvement by volunteers representing pharmacy, medicine and other healthcare professions; as well as science, academia, government, the pharmaceutical industry and consumer organizations. For more information about USP and its standards-setting activities, visit <http://www.usp.org/aboutUSP/media>.

Consumer Reports Medical Guide is a subscription-based online service with rich, continuously updated, content for non-subscribers as well as subscribers. It provides information and treatments ratings on over 200 common and chronic health conditions, over 11,000 drug monographs and safety information. *Consumer Reports Medical Guide* offers consumers independent, trustworthy, and thorough information on the best treatments and prescription drugs, with no advertising influence, and includes information from several organizations that are highly regarded by medical professionals, including the BMJ Publishing Group, the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, and Therapeutic Research Center. Consumers Union has a long history of providing independent information on a variety of health and medical issues through *Consumer Reports* magazine and the *Consumer Reports On Health* newsletter.

Pharmacist’s Letter Therapeutic Research Center is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education as a provider of continuing pharmacy education. Faculty - Philip Gregory, PharmD, Editor, *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database*. “Confusion in the Supplement Aisle: How to Help Consumers Select Dietary Supplements” is intended for pharmacists who care for patients who use natural medicines along with conventional medicines. Upon completion, the learner will be able to: describe the challenges in identifying and selecting high quality dietary supplements, list critical factors involved in determining which supplements should be recommended, describe the elements of the USP Dietary Supplement Verification Program, and apply safety and effectiveness ratings in the process of selecting dietary supplements. This course has been assigned universal program number 422-000-07-113-H01. Pharmacists may earn 1 hour of CE credit (0.1 CEU) by answering at least 70% of the quiz questions correctly. After successful completion, the statement of credit may be printed online. This course was released on March 15th, 2007. This course is free for subscribers to *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database* or *CE-in-the-Letter PLUS*. For *Pharmacist’s Letter* subscribers the cost is \$9.50. The cost for non-subscribers is \$19.00. Therapeutic Research publications and CE offerings are 100% guaranteed. Subscribers may receive a refund. Refunds are issued within 6 to 8 weeks.

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