

over the counter ABUSE

Creatine: too much of a good thing?

By Kristen Berman

The motivation comes right before swimsuit season. Now it's not only girls who go on crash diets in preparation for the beach, but the craze for fitness has spread to teenage males. It's the lure of big muscles- fast. It draws consumers to splurge on products that boost the ability to transform their body into a lean, defined and muscular form. However these dietary supplements are not regulated by the FDA, and therefore bring many risks that may not be worth the lure of the muscles.

What is protein?

The diet fad to cut down on carbs and load up on protein has gone to new heights. Protein is virtually inhaled by those looking to build up their bulk. According to About.com under Bodybuilding, in order for muscles to grow, every day the body must consume more protein than it takes in. Protein supplements are popular ways to achieve that. Sold as a powder to mix with a drink, the supplement typically has very low fat and about 30 grams of protein.

Since protein comes from food, it may be difficult to see the harm in loading up on it. Mark Polson, owner of Polson's Natural Foods in Antioch said that protein in a controlled

amount was fine. When an excess of it is added to the diet, it may become hard for the kidney's to process it all, putting undue strain on them.

The recommended daily allowance (RDA) for the non-weightlifters is .36 grams per pound of body weight.

In the journal 'Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise,' one doctor recommended that lifters get .8 grams per pound, which is 250% higher than the RDA.

Justin Mahaffey, senior at ACHS is taking a protein supplement. "I'm going to take the protein and in about a month get on Creatine," Mahaffey works out four to five times a week at the Jungle Gym in Lindenhurst.

What is creatine?

Creatine is a supplement that will enhance anaerobic performance. It helps with resistance training by bloating muscles, which makes the muscles move less and lift more weight.

According to Creatine FAQ, a article from weightsnet.com, many users of creatine see that their muscle mass increases about six to ten pounds while using it. However, users will probably not go without some side effects. Headaches, clenched teeth and

the sound of blood rushing to their ears have been reported. In addition, stomach cramps have been noticed when reducing the amount of creatine taken.

According to the Creatine FAQ, if someone chooses to take it, proper usage is mandatory for not only the user's health but for creatine to work. It is recommended to drink 8 full glasses of water a day since Creatine pulls water from parts of your body to maximize the muscles and the water needs to be replenished in some way.

Do not mix the creatine with a citrus juice, mix with warm water. Also, avoid caffeine. It should also be noted that if your body has enough creatine already, supplementing it is useless. Dan Mahar, senior, started taking a protein supplement, Whey, and is now on Phosphagen HP, a generic form of creatine.

"I lifted 20 pounds more on my military press," Mahar also works out at the Jungle Gym about three to five times a week.

"I lifted 20 pounds more on my military press."

-Dan Mahar
ACHS senior

How much do you know?

Do you consider Metabolife or other dietary supplements safe to use?

Yes 27% No 73%

Do you consider Creatine safe to use?

Yes 13% No 87%

Were you aware that not all medications/supplements are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration?

Yes 73% No 27%

Would you still use a supplement to achieve its desired results if you were aware of it's harmful side effects?

Yes 13% No 87%

DiETING is looking good worth the risk?

By Jessica Halston

A common sentiment among teenagers is the concern over their appearance.

Despite positive reinforcement, many individuals are liable to feel that they are overweight or unattractive.

The obvious answer to weight loss is diet and exercise, but the effects of this treatment will only come at length.

For a quick solution, teens, as well as adults, are likely to turn to dietary supplements.

Unfortunately for willing

customers, the effects of common weight loss drugs may be even more devastating than the outset.

Why Ephedrine?

Popular pills like Metabolife, an herbal dietary supplement, only reek benefits for the companies they are manufactured by.

Metabolife, as well as similar products MetaboLITE and MetaboMax, consist primarily of ephedrine, which is derived from the dried leaves of the Ephedra plant.

What does it do?

"Ephedrine will destroy your adrenal glands," said a sales representative for a vitamin supply company. Ephedrine is commonly known as the "herbal fen-phen," as its effects include, but are not limited to: high blood pressure, insomnia, nervousness, tremors, seizures, heart rate

irregularities, heart attacks, strokes, and in some severe cases, death.

Ephedrine's effects are especially damaging in diet drugs due to the presence of caffeine.

It is also present in the addictive drug methamphetamine, also known as speed.

What is being done?

The Food and Drug Administration, the same federal agency that banned the sales of fatal diet drug fen-phen,

has attempted to decrease the availability of ephedrine-containing products.

Their proposals included limiting its amount in any one serving of a product to 8 milligrams and restricting its use to only 7 days, but it could no longer be

considered a diet aid under these conditions.

The FDA does not have premarket approval, however, due to the fact that ephedrine is not classified as a drug.

"Over-the-counter medications have numerous side effects," said a pharmacist, who does not recommend their use.

He continued on to advocate the importance of diet and exercise. Even with the use of dietary supplements, it is still necessary to cut back on fats.

A spokesperson from GNC also recommended the use of protein shakes.

Any remedy employed will require you to take in fewer calories than your body can burn.

For continuing information, visit the website for the Mayo Clinic. <http://www.mayoclinic.com>

"Over-the-counter medications have numerous side effects."

-Anonymous pharmacist



Cough syrup more than a remedy?

By Craig Maniscalco

As relief for a common cough, many sufferers turn to such over the counter drugs as Vicks, Robitussin, and Sucrets.

What they may not realize is the possible danger they may be putting themselves or their children in.

What is harmful?

Drugs like Vicks, Robitussin DM, Coricidin, and many other similar cough syrup presents, when taken in larger doses, can cause serious side effects.

These drugs all contain an ingredient called dextromethorphan.

According to pharmacist Kathleen Siemsen, you can find high concentrations of dextromethorphan "in Vicks cough sup presents, and Robitussin DM. Especially in extra strength drugs."

How is it abused?

Taken as a normal cough relief, dextromethorphan is a very helpful drug. However, in larger doses, it can have serious side effects.

"What it can cause is slurred speech and respiratory depression," said Siemsen.

Taken by the handful, it's a powerful hallucinogen.

"In a sense, it's kind of like a poor mans Ecstasy," said Dr. Peter

Rogers. One contributing factor to the growing abuse of this drug is the fact that few people are aware of its side effects.

Dextromethorphan is also used with alcohol or marijuana to boost the effects.

The FDA Drug Abuse Advisory Committee states that additional data is needed before determining the abuse and dependency potential of Dextromethorphan.

"In a sense it's kind of like a poor man's Ecstasy."

-Peter Rogers
Doctor

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