

Frequently Asked Questions

Supplement OWL: The Dietary Supplement Product Registry

The dietary supplement industry has developed a new online product registry designed to provide a more complete picture of the dietary supplement marketplace for government and private stakeholders: legislators, regulators, retailers, industry and consumers. The database will serve as a resource to identify dietary supplements, key ingredients, product label information and claims, and the companies making and marketing those products. The **Supplement OWL™** (Online Wellness Library), allows viewers to search, sort, examine and evaluate labels and other product information to make better, informed choices. Try it for yourself at www.SupplementOWL.org.

Why is this label registry important? This initiative starts with a simple premise: regulators should know what ingredients and products are in the dietary supplement marketplace and who sells them. Companies who manufacture and market dietary supplements have a responsibility to share this basic information with regulators to give them get a better understanding of the size and breadth of the dietary supplement marketplace. A responsible industry wants the legal requirements already in place to be enforced to promote a level playing field for all participants, and regulators need to be able to see the participants to effectively enforce the law. If daylight is indeed “the best disinfectant,” then the **Supplement OWL** helps to clean up the industry by putting it on display.

What information will be in the registry? Any dietary supplement product being sold in the United States is eligible for inclusion in the **Supplement OWL**. It provides an image of the product, a complete product label along with separate fields of information on ingredients, dosage form, serving size, categories of use, product claims, contacts and other information. Participation is free.

Who is behind the Supplement OWL? The Supplement OWL is a self-regulatory project of the dietary supplement industry. Individual companies and their trade associations in the industry are working together to create a product registry that will help increase transparency and accountability in the marketplace. The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN), the leading trade association for the dietary supplement and functional food industry, is spearheading the effort by providing the initial funding and conceptual project management. UL (Underwriters Laboratories), a global independent safety science company, is investing its resources in the development and administration of the registry and the technology that will drive the database.

Why is the Supplement OWL important? Self-regulation is a hallmark of a mature, responsible industry; one that cares about its consumers. Self-regulation shows that the industry is willing to impose obligations on itself to ensure its products not only comply with the law, but help enhance regulation already in place. Self-regulatory initiatives such as the Supplement OWL help foster trust with industry stakeholders and demonstrate a desire to improve the industry from within.

Dietary supplements include vitamins, minerals, herbs and botanicals, amino-acids, sports nutrition supplements, weight management products and specialty supplements. These products are intended to be used as supplements to, not substitutes for, a well-balanced diet and healthy lifestyle. When used properly, dietary supplements can help promote overall good health, fill nutrient gaps, and in some cases, reduce the risk of certain diseases.