

# Don't believe what you read about dietary supplements treating concussions

By ACSH Staff — August 26, 2014



Concussions are a [major concern among](#) <sup>[1]</sup> athletes and it is

imperative that individuals receive appropriate medical attention in the event of a concussion. This is especially important, given that if an athlete resumes activity without appropriate healing time, they are more likely to have another concussion, and the effects of concussions are cumulative. Unfortunately, some unscrupulous companies have [released supplements](#) <sup>[2]</sup> containing turmeric and omega-3s with claims that they prevent, treat, or cure concussions and other traumatic brain injuries (TBIs). These companies are also claiming that their products can speed up the recovery process.

According to the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994, dietary supplements are defined as foods, not drugs, and are therefore exempt from regulation. Furthermore, proof of effectiveness of the supplements is not necessary before the supplement is marketed. However, supplement companies cannot make claims that a supplement can prevent, treat, or cure a condition. For this reason, the FDA monitors the supplement market to ensure that these conditions are not violated and has warned consumers to avoid supplements related to TBIs, as there is no scientific evidence supporting the claims.

This is not a new issue. In 2012, the FDA sent warning letters to two supplement companies marketing products using the taglines, the world's first supplement formulated specifically to assist concussion recovery, and it has the dynamic ability to minimize long-term effects and decrease recovery time. Both companies were required to change their labels.

Despite these warnings, Gary Coody, FDA's National Health Fraud Coordinator says, We're very concerned that false assurances of faster recovery will convince athletes of all ages, coaches, and even parents that someone suffering from a concussion is ready to resume activities before they are really ready. Also, watch for claims that these products prevent or lessen the severity of concussions or TBIs.

ACSH's Ariel Savransky adds, People are always looking for a quick-fix, and seeing these inappropriate claims by these supplement companies could potentially result in harm to athletes or others suffering concussions if they believe what they read. It is imperative that players listen to

medical professionals when dealing with concussions to ensure recovery and reduce risk of further harm. Especially in the sports world, where other considerations such as the desire to win a game or keep a scholarship may take precedence over health, it is very important that athletes, coaches, and parents are educated about the symptoms of concussions and the actions that should be taken in the case of suspected concussion, as well as the fact that the claims made by these supplement companies are 100 percent false.

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**Links**

[1] <http://acsh.org/2014/08/concussions-among-pre-teens-adolescents-need-attention/>

[2] <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/UCM379785.pdf>