

The lowdown on sports nutrition supplements

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Competitive athletes train hard, eat right and often turn to supplements to boost their performance. But do nutrition powders, pills and drinks really help? *Chemical & Engineering News*, the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society looks at the science—or lack thereof—behind the sports nutrition market.

Melody M. Bomgardner, a senior editor at C&EN, reports that the market for nutrition products aimed to improve athletic [performance](#) is growing at about 5 percent per year. It reached \$6.3 billion in 2014. From the steady staple of protein powders to newer fads like grape seed extract, athletes have many options to wade through but not many sources to turn to for verifying a manufacturer's claims. It is up to the consumer to search for and evaluate the clinical evidence—if any—and decide whether a product is worth trying.

Clinical studies on supplements are becoming more important for marketing purposes. But the testing process is still a work in progress. Critics say the numbers of participants are often too small for results to be generalizable. Additionally, some of the studies that are published might focus on measurements, such as blood or urine biomarkers, that don't necessarily translate into improved performance. In other words, a lot of questions remain about the effectiveness—and safety—of many [supplements](#).

More information: Athletes Look To Sports Nutrition Products To Improve Performance, [cen.acs.org/articles/94/i6/Ath ... rition-Products.html](http://cen.acs.org/articles/94/i6/Ath...rition-Products.html)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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