

THE Wellness Minute

Wellness Series: 3.0

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New Herb Study Says “Buyer Beware”

What Does This New Study Tell Us About The Quality of Herbal Supplements?

In February 2015 the Attorney General of the State of New York accused four national retailers on Monday of selling dietary supplements that were fraudulent and in many cases contaminated with unlisted ingredients. He sent cease and desist orders to retailers **Walmart**, **Walgreens**, **Target** and **GNC** to stop selling their own herbal products when research showed that roughly four out of five of the products contained none of the herbs listed on their labels. In many cases, the authorities said, the supplements contained little more than cheap fillers like rice and house plants, or substances that could be hazardous to people with food allergies.

The herbs tested by scientists were Ginkgo Biloba, St. John’s Wort, Garlic, Echinacea, Saw Palmetto and Valerian Root. They used DNA testing which only determines if the herb is present, but not about quality of the herb. For quality, scientists use chromatography to determine if the right part of the herb was used and whether it was prepared or extracted property and contained the therapeutic constituents. What the research showed then was simply whether the herb on the label was in the product. 4 out of 6 **GNC** herbal products were found to contain none of the herb. 3 out of 6 **Target** brand products contained none of the labeled herb. 5 out of 6 **Walgreens** herb products were found to

contain none of the herbs listed. Finally, 4 out of the 6 **WalMart** herbal products contained none of the herbs. These products not only contained no herbs but contained other products such as powdered rice, beans, peas, wild carrots, asparagus and spruce tree.

This testing found that many herbal supplements don’t contain what the label says; just fillers, not herbs.



MediHerb, a company that provides quality herbal products for health care professionals did a survey of Echinacea products available in the U.S in 1994 using chromatography and mass spectrometry. The active constituents of Echinacea are to be alkylamides. The research revealed that most of the Echinacea products available in the U.S. were nearly devoid of alkylamides. What that means that the products were nearly useless and had no therapeutic value. When you purchase herbal products for yourself and family, please consult your healthcare professional. If you don’t you could spend your hard earned money on something that is worthless.

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