

## Response to the Which? Magazine feature: Think twice before taking vitamins and supplements

*“In spite of warnings and advice from the HFMA to include balance within their article, this Which? Magazine investigation contains several significant and misleading inaccuracies, ignoring almost a decade of research from the Government’s National Diet and Nutrition Survey, as well as advice from the Department of Health, which states that food supplements are an essential requirement for several groups of people who are at risk of nutrient deficiency. These groups include pregnant and breastfeeding women, children aged six months to five years, people aged 65 and over, and much of the population during autumn and winter months.”*

*“It is clear from the comments of several scientific experts within the companies tested, that Which’s methodology for testing products has been shown to be highly flawed and has been disputed in every case. Companies referred to in the article have provided their own independent tests results that disprove the Which? tests, but these validated results have not been recognised in any way by Which?”*

*“Like any consumer industry, pricing for individual supplements depends on a number of factors including potency, formula, and quality. It is disingenuous to directly compare the pricing of products that are clearly not like-for-like.”*

*Any health claims relating to food supplements on sale in the UK have been the subject of rigorous assessment by the European Food Safety Authority, and approved by the European Union. In the cases where there are no health claims approved yet, this does not mean there is no consumer benefit, only that this has not yet been approved by EFSA’s process. There is extensive positive research for supplements such as glucosamine in the area of joint health for example.*

*“It is now widely accepted by officials, academics and health care professionals that huge numbers of people are nutrient-deficient, so it is important that serious consideration be given to responsible supplementation to maintain good health.*

*We should all try to eat as healthily as possible, and supplements are not a replacement. However, supplementation is essential for some groups and for thousands of individuals across the UK, these products also help to safeguard nutritional intakes.”*

*“Reports such as this run the real risk of seriously misleading consumers on essential nutrition guidelines.”*

**ENDS**

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### **The HFMA**

The Health Food Manufacturers’ Association (HFMA) is the voice of the UK’s natural health industry and represents more than 125 manufacturers and suppliers of natural health products. Founded in 1965, the HFMA is a not-for-profit organisation which operates long-standing codes of practice to ensure that member companies adhere to high standards and offer good quality, safe products supported by responsible, lawful information.

For further information about the HFMA, visit [www.hfma.co.uk](http://www.hfma.co.uk).