Dietary Supplement Habits of Soldiers of 101st Airborne Division Air Assault

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To achieve optimal military readiness, Soldiers are turning to dietary supplements (DS) to increase strength, endurance, alertness and overall health. **PURPOSE:** Evaluate DS habits of 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) (101st ABN DIV (AA)) Soldiers. **METHODS:** A total of 390 Soldiers completed a diet history including a detailed DS questionnaire. **RESULTS:** Sixty-one percent (n=236; Age 29.0 ±6.6 years; BMI 26.7 ± 3.4 kg/m2) of Soldiers consume at least one DS, of these 58% consume multivitamin supplements (MV), 32% whey protein, 16% energy drinks, 10% creatine and 10% nitric oxide (Table 1).

Table 1: Dietary Supplement Use, Perceived Benefits and Adverse Reactions

Supplement	Purpose of Use	Usage	Perceived Benefit	Adverse Reaction
MV	Supplement diet & improve health Improve performance Improve joint health	Military Training (MT) 52% Deployed (DP) 24% Both 24%	More energy/less fatigue Fewer colds Increase well being	Nausea
Whey	Increase muscle mass, strength, recovery Improve performance Supplement diet and improve health	MT 53% DP 25% Both 16%	Increase muscle mass Recovery Weight/body fat loss	Decrease appetite Weight gain
Energy Drink	Improve physical performance Improve cognitive function Improve joint health	MT 37% DP 34% Both 29%	Feel more energized Alertness Stay awake	Jittery feeling Dehydration Indigestion Crashing feeling Dependency
Creatine	Increase muscle mass, strength, recovery. Improve performance Supplement diet and improve health	MT 50% DP 29% Both 17% N/A 4%	Increase work out duration/intensity Increase muscle strength, size, endurance	Upset stomach Dehydration
Nitric Oxide	Increase muscle mass, strength, recovery. Improve physical	MT 53% DP 18% Both 18% N/A 11%	Increase energy to workout Less muscle	None reported

	performance Supplement diet and improve health		soreness Improve quality of workout	

CONCLUSION: Soldiers are using DS to correct nutrient inadequacies and improve the quality of the daily diet, in order to optimize adaptations from training, expedite recovery and improve health and physical readiness. Future efforts should focus on educating Soldiers to use foods, fluids and nutrient timing as a safer and more effective alternative to DS.

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