Answers to Recent Anti-Magnesium Stearate Marketing Claims

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<th>Anti-Magnesium Stearate Marketing Claims</th>
<th>Facts</th>
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| “World Health Officials Question Safety of Magnesium Stearate” (MgSt) | • Safety of magnesium stearate (MgSt) was not questioned by WHO.  
• Without citing any safety issues, the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) questioned the need to add mg stearate to food.  
• After further investigation, JECFA dropped the issue with no concerns or suggestions regarding the continued use or safety of MgSt.  
• MgSt is classified as GRAS (generally regarded as safe) by the US FDA. It is found in high levels in quality foods such as salmon, olive oil, beef, eggs, etc., and is a common component of a healthy diet. |
| “Magnesium stearate...could impact absorption by as much as 60%”  
This manufacturer says that it “has determined that adding even a small amount of magnesium stearate (as little as one percent) can significantly decrease nutrient dissolution” | • These statements are based on an unscientific, unpublished experiment done by a supplement manufacturer.  
• The experiment was done by dissolving a vitamin C powder in water, either with MgSt or without. MgSt is a fat that is easily digestible in humans. However, without the aid of human digestion, fat & water don’t mix well. If you add a lot of MgSt to a water soluble powder and blend it for a long period of time, you can slow the rate of dissolution in water. The more fat you add and the longer you blend, the slower the dissolution rate in water. The experiment creates a visual effect, but it has nothing to do with human digestion or absorption of nutrients from supplements.  
• This experiment is not published in a peer-reviewed journal. We believe that no reputable journal would accept such an unscientific experiment for publication.  
• Good manufacturers have properly designed equipment to test disintegration and dissolution of dietary supplements or drugs. This testing is done routinely to ensure that tablets and capsules break down and dissolve properly so that nutrients can be absorbed.  
• There is no data in the scientific literature to support the claim that magnesium stearate reduces nutrient absorption when used appropriately in tablet or capsule manufacturing. No data in humans. None in animals. Not one study. |
| “Magnesium stearate...doesn’t add anything of value to the end product” | • A publication by Rutgers University entitled, “Effects of Magnesium Stearate on Tablet Properties” reports that tablets containing 1% magnesium stearate have the least deviation from the mean, the most uniformity in composition and maintain the highest percentage of drug release.  
• These ingredients improve the blend and flow of product ingredients, helping to ensure that each tablet or capsule meets label claim, having “uniformity in composition,” that is, not having too little or too much of any ingredient.  
• Products manufactured without effective flow agents may suffer from lack of uniformity and inconsistent dosages in individual tablets or capsules.  
• Magnesium stearate and stearic acid are used by the vast majority of reputable dietary supplement and drug manufacturers because they add value; they improve product quality and consistency. |

[http://www.soe.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/gset/PharmaDC.pdf](http://www.soe.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/gset/PharmaDC.pdf)


Why is this an important issue?
Because this is an attempt to smear and discredit reputable dietary supplement manufacturers by disseminating misinformation. It’s an effort to gain a marketing edge by storytelling that sacrifices accuracy and good science. It’s bad for the dietary supplement industry; bad for natural health practitioners; bad for patients who depend on this industry to care for their health.

Dietary supplements are manufactured by people, and health professionals need to be able to trust the people who make the products they use. So, for the sake of your patients and your practice, don’t be swayed by unscientific storytelling or smear campaigns. We encourage you to make sure that your suppliers are trustworthy, and that they gain your trust by always putting “science first.”