

## Take Shaklee Supplements, Be Healthier

We've known this for years, but now we have a landmark study—the first of its kind and the largest long-term supplement study conducted in history—to lend even more scientific support to this claim.

The Landmark Shaklee Food Supplement Study (as we call it) was conducted by Dr. Gladys Block, head of the UC Berkeley School of Public Health and considered one of the top epidemiologists in the US. She and her team randomly selected 300 from more than 1000 people who had been using Shaklee supplements for at least 20 years (20 – 42 years, to be exact). Their health was assessed through questionnaires, a physical examination, and blood tests, then compared with the health of people who had supplemented for at least 20 years with non-Shaklee brand multi-vitamins, and also with people who had not supplemented at all for at least 20 years. Roger Barnett (President and CEO of Shaklee) told us at the global conference in August that when he walked in the room to hear the results of the study, Dr. Block was vibrating with excitement, saying, “These results are incredible!” Scientists are usually pretty calm people, so this must have been fun to see!

Officially the study is named “Usage patterns, health, and nutritional status of long-term multiple dietary supplement users: a cross-sectional study.” It was published on October 24, 2007 in *Nutrition Journal*, a prestigious online peer-reviewed international scientific journal. The study in its entirety can be accessed at [www.nutritionj.com/content/6/1/30](http://www.nutritionj.com/content/6/1/30).

The very understated, scientific language of the conclusion of the study says that the Shaklee supplement users “were more likely to have optimal concentrations of chronic-disease-related biomarkers, and less likely to have suboptimal blood nutrient concentrations, elevated blood pressure, and diabetes compared to non-users and multivitamin/mineral users.” The more general, but accurate, interpretation is that the group that supplemented with Shaklee had dramatically better health than those who did not.

Dr. Block approached Shaklee with the idea for the study. She was concerned over the media distortions of vitamin supplementation and wanted to do a long-term study to show the benefits and to overcome some of the flaws in the “bad” studies. She asked Shaklee to provide subjects for the study. While Shaklee did fund the study, the design and execution of the study and the conclusions drawn and published were under the control of Dr. Block from the start. While we who love Shaklee might wish the study talked a lot more about Shaklee specifically, this is a work of science, not advertising. The structure of the study is to compare people who took a bunch of Shaklee supplements to those who took just a multi to those who took none. Finding people who took just a Shaklee multi for 20 years (for a direct comparison) would be nearly impossible, because Shaklee customers tend to be better nutritionally educated (because their distributors provide good information) and therefore take more supplements.

The study contains some pretty eye-opening information hidden within the scientific verbiage; we'll take a look at some of that detail and pull the good stuff out into the light where we non-scientists can see it more clearly.

The first, and most obvious, point is that the Shaklee group scored a more healthy total on virtually every marker in the study—disease-related, nutrient-related, or general-health-related. There was absolutely no sign of any toxicity or “poisoning” from taking too many supplements—and this group took a lot of supplements. In addition, the Shaklee group was older than either of the other groups (almost 10 years older than the non-supplement group!), and it still scored better, including a lower Body Mass Index (BMI).

The nutritional numbers (“serum nutrient concentrations”) were quite revealing. In every comparative category, the Shaklee users had better results than either of the other two groups—most of them statistically significant (big, meaningful differences, in other words). Interestingly, when ferritin (iron) was measured, the results were different between men and women. Women in general struggle with low iron—the Shaklee group had the highest measure at 117.4 (an optimal level). Men are more prone to elevated iron levels—the Shaklee group had the lowest measure at 117.6 (much lower than the other groups). So whichever gender was taking Shaklee supplements, whatever the tendency of that group, the score was right smack in the optimal range. And the one non-comparative measure in the study—Vitamin D—showed the Shaklee group right in the middle of the optimal range—and no single individual tested was outside the optimal range on either end.

While the study doesn't directly draw this conclusion, it's clear that taking Shaklee supplements, even in relatively high quantities compared to the population at large (only 3 out of 11,000 individuals in the entire

NHANES study, which was used for the comparative data, took supplements at the level of the Shaklee group) is not only safe, but it resulted in serum nutrient levels that are about as good as they can get.

The serum biomarker concentrations section compares a number of non-nutrient blood components that are directly tied to health and disease. Some of these measures are quite familiar (cholesterol, triglycerides), while others are less commonly known (homocysteine, c-reactive protein). Again, in every category, the Shaklee users had better numbers. And this particular section produced two very dramatic results (as though winning every category isn't dramatic enough!).

C-reactive protein (CRP) is a measure that is predictive of future cardiovascular disease risk (and has been strongly linked to the risk of developing certain cancers). In other words, the higher the level of CRP, the greater the risk of heart disease and some cancers. It's one of those measures that you really want to be low in your bloodstream. Not only was the Shaklee group the only one that was within the optimal range (<.3), but *not a single individual in the entire group was outside the optimal range*. Let's word that differently; while not one person in the Shaklee group had elevated levels of CRP, both of the other groups *averaged* in the elevated range. That would be almost beyond belief if we didn't know how amazing Shaklee supplements are. Where do you want your CRP to be?

Similarly, triglycerides are clearly linked to heart disease risk and metabolic syndrome. And similarly, not a single person in the Shaklee group had triglycerides over 150 (the top of the optimal range), while the Shaklee group as a whole averaged 121—really good. The non-supplement users averaged over 180!

While perhaps not quite as dramatic, the measures of homocysteine (another important cardiovascular disease predictor) in the non-Shaklee groups were approximately 50% higher (a bad thing) than in the Shaklee group. And again, while the Shaklee group measured well inside the optimal range (6.1, optimal is <9), each of the other two groups' average was above the optimal range.

Obviously, health is far more complex than a few blood readings. But at the same time, each of these factors has been clearly and unmistakably linked to diseases that, let's face it, you really don't want. This study dramatically demonstrates that taking an array of Shaklee supplements significantly reduces the risk of incidence of these diseases.

One of the very interesting findings concerned blood pressure. A positive link between serum nutrient levels and blood pressure has been shown in some studies (and not in others), but it has been difficult to show that any particular nutrient can reduce elevated blood pressure. In this study, the Shaklee group had "significantly lower" blood pressure than either of the other two groups, but the multi user group was not significantly lower than the non-user group. The authors speculate that Vitamins B and C (each of which has been studied individually, with mixed results, in relation to blood pressure, and each of which were present in optimal levels in the Shaklee group) together may have a synergistic effect—producing better results in combination than the sum of each of their individual benefits. Scientists really like single-variable studies—they produce much more verifiable and duplicable results and conclusions. But nutrition may be a more complex science that will require more complex studies to understand. It could be that having optimal levels of many nutrients really does produce better health than simply adding the proven benefits of individual nutrients together. This is one of those areas in which common sense would seem to be ahead of science, but in this study we see science perhaps catching up a bit.

Finally, in the area of incidence of disease (the "rubber meets the road" area), dramatic results can be seen in several areas. In the cardiac-related group, which includes coronary heart disease, heart attack, angina, and congestive heart failure, the Shaklee group—not surprisingly, given the blood readings discussed above—showed lower incidence of each disease. And be reminded again, the Shaklee group is 10 years older than the non-user group and 6 years older than the multi group. The Shaklee group also showed a lower incidence of emphysema. Perhaps the most dramatic disease-related finding, however, was with diabetes. The non-user and multi-user groups had a 4-5 times higher incidence of diabetes than the Shaklee group—again, despite being younger. The study even posits that the comparatively high levels of multiple antioxidants found in the blood of the Shaklee group members could be a contributing factor to this finding.

So not only does taking an array of Shaklee supplements reduce the risk of incidence of some pretty nasty diseases, it also demonstrably reduces actual incidence among this group of users.

It must be noted that the designers of the study eliminated cancer from the study. Anyone with a history of cancer (other than non-melanoma skin cancer) was removed from consideration in the study (in all 3 groups), because cancer and cancer treatment alter blood chemistry in a way that would have skewed the results.

And lastly, a measure of overall health that has been used in many studies and has been found to be a statistically accurate measure is self-assessed health status. In this study, the Shaklee group reported their health to be much better than either of the other groups, and there was little difference between those other two groups in their reporting. In other words, just taking a Brand X multi for 20 years did not result in a statistically significant difference in how people reported their health versus taking no supplements whatsoever.

So what does all this mean? Well, a lot. This study is a very big deal. Conclusions in a scientific journal have to be proven by solid data and procedures. Conclusions in a wrap-up paragraph like this one follow a somewhat looser set of requirements. They can actually use common sense and logic instead of just data.

First, the study shows very clearly that using a broad array of Shaklee supplements for at least 20 years produces some pretty dramatic health benefits—both in indicators as well as disease incidence. We've said for many years that you will pay for your health—whether it's good health or bad health—so it makes more sense to pay for good health. With this study, it's clear that paying for (and taking!) Shaklee supplements produces dramatic, positive impact on health. Now, the study results don't mean that if you take Shaklee, you're bulletproof. But they do indicate that if you take Shaklee, you'll be better off than if you don't. So now the question of "What is your health worth?" becomes a more meaningful one, because there are clear results to pin to the cost of the supplements.

Second, the study shows very clearly that taking a lot of Shaklee nutrients is a good thing for your health. We often run into fears about "overdosing" on vitamins in people (but strangely, we've never run into anyone afraid of "overdosing" on M&M's or ice cream, which have virtually zero benefits and plenty of downside). The subjects in the Shaklee group took a lot of supplements, and the only results seem to be positive. There is NO indication of toxic effects, and there are LOTS of indications of substantial health benefits—some of which seem to be clearly tied to taking relatively large amounts of Shaklee nutrients. In other words, having plenty of a broad array of Shaklee nutrients in your system produces better health. It's a simple equation. There may be (and likely are) limits beyond which there is diminishing effect, but this study gives no indication of where those limits may be.

Is the fact that the multivitamin-only group used Brand X (an assumption, but logically true) and the multiple-supplement group used Shaklee products a significant factor? That's a harder question to answer based just on the data. But the fact that Shaklee supplements are scientifically tested in over 100 clinical studies, are manufactured to pharmaceutical standards, are tested and tested and tested for purity, are naturally-sourced from better-than-organic raw materials (not from chemicals produced in a lab), are produced in a way that preserves the "life" of the nutrients (no high temperatures, harsh solvents, etc.), and are unconditionally guaranteed by a company with more than 50 years of experience—the #1 natural food supplement company in the country—all would lead one by common sense to answer, "YES!" And when you consider that the multivitamins consumed by the multi-only group were almost certainly synthetic (since the vast majority of multivitamins are synthetic), and that there are a number of measures in the study in which the no-supplement group actually had better readings than the multi-only group, it only adds weight to that answer.

And finally, the study provides something that no other supplement manufacturer anywhere in the world has—proof that taking their supplements long-term provides substantial health benefits. No other company can make that claim and back it with evidence like this. If you want better health over the long run—from lower CRP and triglycerides and blood pressure to lower incidence of diabetes and heart disease; if you want to be able truthfully to report your health as very good or excellent; if you want to feel better—simply swallowing a few Shaklee supplements on a daily basis is a very easy—and very effective—way to start.