

Introduction to the Office of Dietary Supplements

The history of the Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS) is rooted in legislation—the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 (DSHEA) and subsequent congressional language form the basis of its mission, vision, and programs. The passage of DSHEA followed important legislative changes. In 1976 Congress prohibited the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from limiting the potency of vitamins and minerals in supplements or regulating them as drugs based on their potency. In 1990, nutrition labels on packaged foods were mandated by the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) and certain health claims for foods were permitted. Related questions about labeling and regulation of dietary supplements led Congress to pass the DSHEA. The Act classified dietary supplements as a special category of food and the directed the establishment of an Office of Dietary Supplements within the National Institutes of Health.

Through its programs, funding opportunities, and activities, and consistent with the mission of Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives (DPCPSI) and in partnership with NIH Institutes, Centers, and Offices, ODS coordinates and supports research on the health effects of dietary supplements, communicates research findings to the public, health professionals, and government agencies, and provides training opportunities for future supplement researchers.

The 2020 ODS Strategic Plan Annual report for 2020 and the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan can be viewed at: <https://ods.od.nih.gov/pubs/strategicplan/ODSStrategicPlan2017-2021.pdf> and <https://ods.od.nih.gov/pubs/strategicplan/ODSStrategicPlan2017-2021.pdf>, respectively.

*The **mission** of ODS is to support, conduct, and coordinate scientific research and provide intellectual leadership for the purpose of strengthening the knowledge and understanding of dietary supplements to foster an enhanced quality of life and health for the U.S. population.*

*The **vision** of ODS is that researchers, health professionals, government officials, other policymakers, and consumers will have ready access to scientific information of the highest quality on the health effects of dietary supplements.*

*ODS's five **goals** are:*

- 1. Expand the scientific knowledge base on dietary supplements by stimulating and supporting a full range of biomedical research and by developing and contributing to collaborative initiatives, workshops, meetings, and conferences.*
- 2. Enhance the dietary supplement research workforce through training and career development.*
- 3. Foster development and dissemination of research resources and tools to enhance the quality of dietary supplement research.*
- 4. Translate dietary supplement research-findings into useful information for consumers, health professionals, researchers, and policymakers.*
- 5. Coordinate and support the development of collaborative initiatives to address gaps in dietary supplement research.*