



## Hawaii State Department of Health

### Disease Outbreak Control Division

<http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/>

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## Hepatitis, liver failure in persons taking diet supplements

The Hawaii State Department of Health is investigating reports of sudden hepatitis and liver failure in persons from around the state. None of these persons had an infectious disease or other more usual expected risk factors for hepatitis. Currently, the only common finding among these individuals is the use of a dietary nutritional supplement for weight loss and/or muscle gain.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### **What is Hepatitis? And what is liver failure?**

Hepatitis is a disease in which the liver becomes swollen. The swelling can become severe enough to cause the liver to stop functioning (liver failure). Liver failure can be life-threatening.

#### **Why is the liver important?**

The liver helps your body digest food, store energy, and remove poisons/toxins. Without your liver, you cannot survive very long.

#### **What are the symptoms of hepatitis?**

Hepatitis may cause stomach/abdominal pain or discomfort, feeling tired, loss of appetite, nausea and/or vomiting, yellow skin and/or yellow eyes. Some persons may have dark-colored urine and pale stools.

#### **What should I do if I have symptoms of hepatitis, and have been taking dietary or nutritional supplements to lose weight and/or build muscle?**

Persons who have symptoms of hepatitis should contact their health care provider immediately. Please do NOT discard any supplements, medications, or herbs you have been taking, even if you have stopped taking them. These may be collected from you for testing.

#### **What should I do if I feel okay, but have been taking a dietary or nutritional supplement to lose weight and/or build muscle?**

The Department of Health urges people who use dietary or nutritional supplements for weight loss and/or muscle gain to use caution and contact their health care provider for guidance and monitoring.

#### **What product is causing this?**

The Department of Health is in the early stages of this investigation and has not yet identified the exact source of this condition.

**What is the Department of Health doing?**

The Department of Health has issued a statewide Medical Advisory to doctors, clinics, and hospitals. The Department is investigating the matter, and is collaborating closely with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to protect the health of our state.