VINPOCETINE

url: https://www.opss.org/article/vinpocetine-dietary-supplement-products  
  
  
VINPOCETINE IN DIETARY SUPPLEMENT PRODUCTS  
Vinpocetine is a synthetic substance derived from an alkaloid compound found in the leaves of the Vinca minor, or lesser periwinkle plant, and Voacanga seeds. It s often advertised as being able to improve memory or focus due to reported effects of increased blood flow to the brain. In some countries (such as China, Germany, and Russia), vinpocetine is considered a drug, however its status in the United States is controversal.  
  
Vinpocetine is on the DoD Prohibited Dietary Supplement Ingredients list.  
  
In the U.S., vinpocetine is often found as an ingredient in dietary supplement products marketed to boost cognitive performance and support memory. Sometimes it s also be included in supplements touted for weight-loss, physical performance, motion sickness, eye care, and nervous-system support.  
  
On 6 September 2016, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced its tentative conclusion that vinpocetine (1) does not meet the definition of a dietary ingredient, and (2) is excluded from the definition of a dietary supplement. A final ruling has not yet been made on whether or not vinpocetine can be included as an ingredient in dietary supplement products.  
  
How might vinpocetine affect my health and performance?  
Some studies of elderly and stroke patients suffering mild or moderate symptoms of dementia have reported improvements in memory, concentration, and cognitive skills. However, vinpocetine does not appear to benefit those with more severe symptoms of mental disorders and dementia.  
  
Side effects such as facial flushing, headache, sleep disturbances, nausea, and dizziness have been associated with vinpocetine use. Because vinpocetine can affect blood flow, anyone taking blood thinners should use caution.  
  
Larger, more well-designed human studies are still needed to determine the effects of vinpocetine among healthy and younger populations, especially when vinpocetine is used over long periods of time.  
  
Why should consumers be cautious, especially women?  
According to FDA, products sold as dietary supplements are not reviewed under the safety or effectiveness standards that apply to drugs. This means FDA has not reviewed every vinpocetine product (or its label) before it is available to consumers. In fact, analysis of numerous vinpocetine supplements has shown that the actual amount of vinpocetine varied greatly from what was listed on the product labels.  
  
In addition, in 2019 FDA released a statement warning women of childbearing age about possible safety risks associated with dietary supplements containing vinpocetine. According to FDA, vinpocetine has been associated with adverse reproductive effects and might cause a miscarriage or harm fetal development.  
  
For more information, please visit FDA's web page on "Vinpocetine in Dietary Supplements."