



# **SUPPLEMENTS EXPLAINED MASTERCLASS**

**MODULE 3**

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## **TRANSCRIPT**

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## Module 3: The Doctor-Approved Guide to Buying, Storing, and Taking Your Supplements with Joel Kahn, MD

Nathan Crane:

Welcome to Module 3 of the Supplements Explained Masterclass. I'm your host and natural health researcher, Nathan Crane. During this masterclass, you'll learn firsthand which supplements work, which ones don't, which ones you should probably avoid, which ones you really don't need, how to pick effective supplements, how to save money and time, and how to use supplements as supplements. And I said that before in the previous modules, what I mean by that is what's the most effective diet and lifestyle you need to follow, first and foremost, to contribute towards 80% of your health? And then let's fill in that extra 20% for vitality and longevity with specific targeted supplementation. So I'm really glad you're joining me and my guests, experts and doctors, for this important masterclass. Let's go ahead and dive into this third module with Dr. Joel Kahn.

Nathan Crane:

As one of the world's top cardiologists, Dr. Joel Kahn has treated thousands of acute heart attacks during his career. Even more, he's helped thousands of people prevent heart disease and heart attacks by teaching the most effective diet, supplementation, and lifestyle changes that lead to a healthy heart, immune system, and a long and vital life. In this module, Dr. Kahn will be sharing with us how to save time and how to time your supplements for effectiveness and what to look for when buying supplements to make sure quality and efficacy are of the highest standard.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

Hello, I'm Joel Kahn. I'm a medical doctor. I'm trained as a cardiologist. I'm triple board certified by various organizations. I have an active practice and see patients and I care a lot about their health. And one of the topics that we cover all the time is: do I need vitamins? What supplements do I take? How do I know if they're good quality? How do I know if they're working? How do I know if they're not working for me? These are really important questions. If you're going to spend a dollar, make sure it's working for you. So let's talk about that. And let's begin with a really simple but crucial distinction. There are water-soluble vitamins, and there are fat-soluble vitamins, and that's really the two buckets that vitamins go into. And vitamins are a little different than supplements. Supplements are often things like minerals that aren't officially vitamins, but let's go back to vitamins.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

So water-soluble vitamins. Vitamin C, the whole family of vitamin B, they will be absorbed with a glass of water, for example, because they will be dissolved in water. And usually you're taking your vitamins with a big glass of water. Hopefully that works for you, that's how I do it. But very important is the family. There's four of them that are called fat-soluble vitamins: vitamin A, vitamin D, vitamin E, and vitamin K. They are best absorbed... and remember, I mean, a vitamin's only going to help you if it actually gets from your stomach inside your body to have action on your cells. So these fat-soluble vitamins require some fat to have the best chance of being absorbed fully. So you will want to take a fat-soluble vitamin, if possible, even if it's a small amount of food. You don't have to get out a stick of butter or a tub of coconut oil, but a small amount of food. Remember, almost all foods, even fruit, even vegetables, a potato, will have some fat. But, for example, a little bit of almond butter, a little bit of peanut butter, just your usual breakfast, lunch, or dinner, all that will help you absorb your fat-soluble vitamins.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

And just one last comment. If you're going to ask about a multivitamin, multivitamins are usually a mixture of water-soluble vitamins – your Bs, your Cs – and fat-soluble vitamins. So the ones that I mentioned. Usually I recommend to my patients in my clinic, if it's a multivitamin, wait to take it with breakfast, maybe put it in your lunch bag, take it with lunch. That way you'll get the water-soluble vitamins in and you get the fat-soluble vitamins optimized. So you feel your best if you're going to take that vitamin.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

A really important question that I just don't see asked enough is are these vitamins benefiting me? Are they actually getting in my system? And when I discuss with the patient that topic, it usually revolves as much as we can down to the question, can we measure it? For example, I don't just shotgun in my clinic everybody gets 30 vitamins. No, that's just not reasonable and it's expensive. But I can tell you right now, the odds are you're missing one of the vitamins in an optimal way for your health, or at least the majority of people are. 90% of people, maybe is a reasonable estimate, are low in a nutrient called omega-3 fatty acids as an example.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

So the answer to the question is test. You will check vitamin D level, vitamin D like David is crucial for so many functions in the body. And right now we talk so much about vitamin D in immune health. Check a blood level. It's called vitamin D 25-OH. Any doctor, any lab draws a vitamin D level. Let's just say with the normal usually being 30 to 150 range. You're 18. Well, you want to get on a vitamin D supplement called vitamin D3. Remember it's a fat-soluble vitamin, so you want to take it with some food, and retest. These are inexpensive blood tests. So you can confirm that one, you're taking enough; and two, it's getting absorbed; and three, you're in a range where you're probably going to benefit in either how you feel or your bone health or your cardiovascular health or your immune function support health. Retest. You can do that with a lot of vitamins, not all of them, but omega-3, there's a blood test. Vitamin C, there's a blood test.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

Sometimes you'll just know by the feeling you have, by your response of perhaps your blood pressure, by the fact that your immune health seems to be better, by the fact that your stuffy nose has resolved. But when possible, for the really crucial vitamins... Magnesium. Magnesium's a simple one to check in the blood or in what's called red blood cell magnesium. You want to make sure you get it up to optimal levels.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

I'll leave you with one more. One of my favorite vitamins and we'll talk about it in the heart health section is coenzyme Q10 or CoQ10. There's a blood test. I'm a cardiologist. This is one of the most important nutrients in the heart. Well, I will measure it in the blood. And when my patients are low, I'll optimize it, recheck. I might have to re-dose them even a little higher. So that's how I approach it to really be precise.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

There is so much data, and actually it goes back decades, that despite a healthy diet, because that is the fundamental foundation of health, is a healthy diet, we are still very prone to certain nutritional

deficiencies. I have an advanced cardiology preventive practice, and I do blood work much more extensive than the usual doctor, usual cardiologist. Not because I want to be fancy, but because I want to identify problems and help my patients and help them feel better and be healthier. So the number one most common nutrient deficiency is something I joke with my patients. We all should get taught this in first grade. Is omega-3 fatty acid. We should read a book, Jack and Jill you can't make omega-3. You need to learn to eat it. And if you don't eat enough of it, you need to learn to take a supplement of it. And I teach patients it's the chia seeds, the flax seeds, the walnuts, perhaps the leafy greens, the fatty fish. But even with that, there's a blood test and people are low. So number one most common nutrient deficiency is omega-3.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

Number two and I think equally important is the vitamin D level. People swear to me, "Doc, I'm outside all summer. I live in Arizona. I did a telemedicine consult with you in Nevada, where I'm in the sunshine." Their blood level is low in vitamin D so commonly. So because of how important it is, we supplement it.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

One of the most concerning ones, a little less frequent is vitamin B-12. And that's not just a vegan problem. There's a lot of reasons, including some of the medications, over-the-counter medications that people take that lead them to be low in vitamin B-12. You want your brain healthy, you want your nerves healthy, your blood cells healthy – vitamin B-12.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

It's pretty uniform that getting enough magnesium is a problem. Magnesium's a mineral. So that's a common deficiency even in people eating a large number of fruit and vegetable servings a day because our soil quality has gone down. That red, beautiful apple in this year is very different in magnesium content to a red, beautiful apple, 70, 80 years ago; it's much less in magnesium. So the food may be good and your diet may be good, but your blood level. And I would say those are the top four or five that I see.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

I'll throw in just one last one, iodine. Unless somebody's supplementing with iodine, in which case I sometimes see iodine excess. Iodine is important in thyroid function, breast health, cholesterol control, cardiac health. Iodine is found in iodized salt, but many people do avoid much salt. It's found in seaweed and other kind of Asian dishes that are eaten intermittently by people and not too many other sources actually. So iodine deficiency is common. And it's kind of funny. I live in Detroit. Our city is built on a salt mine. That's some fact you might not know, but people don't eat salt. And I do actually advise a small amount of iodized salt to my patients to get enough iodine, but you can measure it. It's a simple urine test. So those are the big ones and there's many others, believe me.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

A lot of people ask me, "What about calcium? Am I low in calcium?" And there are a lot of reasons to be low or high in calcium. Some of them are diseases, conditions, endocrine or hormonal reasons, but some of it is dietary. Calcium is very rich in leafy greens, things like Swiss chard, for example, and kale and arugula. But there is the ability to be low in calcium and of course it affects our bones and there's this beautiful synergy of dietary calcium with vitamin D and vitamin K2. So you can do that with food, eat a big salad with mushrooms and natto beans, and you're going to get that trinity together. But that's why

a lot of multivitamins will include a little bit of calcium, a little bit of vitamin D3 and a little bit of vitamin K2 to optimize bone health and build strong bones. But deficiency in calcium is something that we can solve with food in most cases. Low-dose calcium supplements maybe have some support for bone health, but I do keep my patients to a low range of dosing.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

In my clinic, I do try and educate people about the power of plant-based food choices. And they ask me, "Well, doc, I drink milk. I eat cheese. Isn't that enough calcium? Why do I need to learn about the leafy greens that provide me plant-based sources of calcium?" And the data's very strong from actual scientific studies, again, that plant-based sources of calcium are actually readily absorbed and do get incorporated into bones. On average, studies that have done a bone health in plant-based eaters and more dairy-based eaters show equivalents. Dairy isn't necessary. It is a source of calcium, but it isn't necessary. And dairy comes with some baggage.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

Recently, there's been a flurry of studies about the relationship between dairy consumption and prostate cancer in men. That should concern men and cause them to ask the question with all the substitutes out there. And a lot of them substitute dairy products now. The oat milk and soy milk and almond milk will often be fortified, just like milk is often fortified with various nutrients, including calcium. So there's lots of options that do not require milk building strong bones. It's a marketing statement and not really a strongly supported scientific statement. And again, there are populations like Asians and African Americans where the vast majority are lactose intolerant, a lot of GI upset. Why go through that pain when you can get calcium and strong bones from food and properly dosed supplement?. Again, calcium's a mineral and calcium can be taken on an empty stomach with water.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

You should be at least somewhat interested and even concerned if the quality of the vitamins and supplements you're buying are of value to you and are of top quality. I mean, I'm in Detroit. We kick the tires on a car before we take it for a test drive and try and evaluate how good a vehicle it is before we put our dollars down. Vitamins aren't any different. It's just harder. Our government, our FDA has a process called GMP, good manufacturing processes and they basically set up criteria. And not all, in fact, the minority of vitamin companies match these criteria of quality, of content, of concentration, of sourcing of their vitamins. You may never have noticed it, but next time you're in a vitamin shop or online, look for a symbol that says GMP, good manufacturing processes. It's at least one hurdle that a vitamin company goes through to try and differentiate itself from others that don't meet that quality.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

Now the FDA, our government, doesn't actually do that testing. They outsource it to what's called third-party certification. They let other companies set up their own criteria. The three big ones are Consumer Labs, NSF, and USP. These are companies that are supposed to be independent of the vitamin industry, that they go out and buy vitamins, test them and provide reports. If those vitamins and supplements meet the criteria, then they can certify them with a GMP seal. So you'll see and you might want to check out those websites. USP and Consumer Labs, for example, but look at a minimum for that GMP certification.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

A lot of multivitamins nowadays have added some ground-up fruits and vegetable powders into the capsules or tablets. A lot of powders are concentrated fruits and vegetables. Then there are dedicated tablets and capsules to give you extra fruit and vegetables. Well, if you stop and pause for a minute, you're probably aware there's a little debate between conventional fruits and vegetables, organic fruits and vegetables.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

And if you're going to take a concentrated capsule, powder, tablet, liquid, I strongly urge you to consider if you can find a vitamin that has the organic label, because you probably don't want to take a concentrated source that might be contaminated with a rich amount of pesticides, herbicides, toxins. Unfortunately that's a real issue nowadays. And one way you can protect your body, you're spending money on supplements and vitamins, you don't want to rush to add in more of these toxins than you can, is get organic supplements, get organic fruit and vegetable, particularly if it's fruit and vegetable powders, fruit and vegetable capsules. That's what you'll find in my clinic when we're stressing beetroot powder, for example, or green powders, or a combination of fruit and vegetable powders. They'll be organic labeled.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

One of the choices you'll have to make when you purchase supplements is they can come in different preparations. There are tinctures that you might put under your tongue, for example. There are some gel pack vitamins and supplements. All of them promote the idea that the absorption is a little more efficient because nothing actually gets broken down. It's already in a form that once it's in either under the tongue or in the GI system, the stomach and the intestines, it's ready to go. Where a capsule has to be dissolved or open up to release its content. Probably the most difficult are tablets. You've probably seen vitamin tablets that are hard and just imagine that your stomach acid and enzymes have to break it down.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

So these are decisions to be made, but they're offset by costs. Some of the more expensive vitamins are the liquids and the gel packs, plus portability. You might be traveling for work. You might be going on vacation and you want to bring your vitamins and supplements with you. Taking liquids, taking gels all make it a little bit difficult. Plus there may be some rulings about what you can have in your carry-on bag. These may seem trivial, but they come up with patients of mine and therefore really usually capsule form vitamins are reliable.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

Now there are some people that will describe that in their bowel movement they actually see the shell of the capsule, or they've seen an undigested tablet. There's probably something not right about their intestinal digestive system if that's the case, or maybe that's just not the right supplement for them, if that were to happen to you. But I concentrate in my clinic for this balance between cost, absorption, portability, storage. I like vegetarian capsules that get easily broken down and don't necessarily have any animal component to them. If you're not aware of that, just turn the bottle around. If it says beef gelatin, that's the capsule source, or if it says vegetarian capsule, you can usually find a source that isn't made of beef or pork capsule material.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

I think ultimately you're going to have to make a decision on what is most appealing to you. There are people that just don't like the idea of the gel pack or the liquid vitamins. You're going to have to look at cost. And finally, you're going to look at your particular vitamin. I mean, if the only choice I had were necessarily a beef gelatin capsule versus a liquid that was without animal products, I might pick the liquid. But I think in general you can depend... that good quality GMP-certified vitamins, whether they're tinctures, liquid, powders, or capsules, that you can depend on them to work. It's just really your preference and your ease of taking them on a regular basis.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

Well, in my field of preventive medicine and particularly preventive cardiology, it's commonly said that one of the untaught miracles is the power of the body to heal itself. If you stop introducing the toxins causing the disease, whether they be cigarettes, diet, stress, poor sleep, or issues with nutrition, and you introduce healthy and supportive care of all kinds in a holistic sense. I go even a step further that it's even a bigger miracle that we never need to develop most diseases if we introduce ourselves to the healthiest of diets and lifestyle, as early as we can. I review this particularly from a nutrition standpoint, in terms of preventing heart disease, preventing type 2 diabetes, obesity, skin conditions, kidney conditions, autoimmune conditions in my book, *The Plant-Based Solution*, where I go through how the science says that we can again, maintain our health.

Dr. Joel Kahn:

Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Maintaining your health is always the better option than finding out you have a problem and coming across my book or other books, *The Plant-Based Solution* and others, and dig yourself out of a hole. So start now, start early, do it right, do it with good nutrition. But food is the core of so many preventative programs, but it isn't enough. And we have to optimize, we have to maximize our nutrition. There are actually 37 billion billion chemical reactions in our cells every second. 37 billion billion. Put all those zeros down. They all need minerals, nutrients, vitamins, antioxidants, anti-immune excess inflammation support. So to optimize all that going on, intelligently go to a specialist, get tested, pick high-quality supplements, vitamins, multiminerals that work for you and feel your best and I think you'll enjoy the experience.