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## Metabolife <sup>[1]</sup>

Alice,

I am a 22-year-old college student. I weigh about 140 lbs. and I am 5 feet 5 inches tall and I want to start using the diet drug Metabolife. I was wondering if you can tell me how safe it is. I want to lose about 15 to 20 pounds and I was hoping to get your insight on the issue and, if possible, any health risk or addiction issues. I will really appreciate your answer on this matter. I tried research on the Internet and all I could get is info on people who want to sell me the product. I don't want to use something and become dependent on it or risk my health. It's just not worth it. Any help you can give me will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

## **Answer**

Dear Reader,

It's a great idea to consider possible risks before trying a new product! Metabolife is considered a dietary supplement and contains numerous vitamins, minerals, and other chemical compounds. Just like some other weight loss products, people have claimed that Metabolife has helped them lose weight, but the research is still unclear. It's possible that these results are due to the weight management aid aspect of the product, but it also may be that users are also increasing their physical activity and modifying their diet while taking the supplement. In terms of addiction, one of the primary ingredients in Metabolife Ultra is caffeine, which is known to have mildly addictive properties, but studies have not yet at whether Metabolife Ultra as a whole is considered to be addictive. In addition, because the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) doesn't regulate dietary supplements such as Metabolife, these claims have not been evaluated by the agency.

Time to talk safety: Metabolife originally contained ephedrine, which is derived from the ma huang root. As of April 12, 2004, sales of dietary supplements containing ephedrine (also known as ephedra) were banned by the FDA. The World Health Organization petitioned to have international restrictions placed on the manufacture and distribution of ephedrine because its use has been associated with cardiovascular problems (including heart attack and stroke), seizures, induced psychosis, and even death. Most of these complications occurred in otherwise healthy

young to middle aged adults who were trying to lose weight or increase their energy levels. Research has also suggested that people taking ephedrine may develop a dependence to it.

The newly formulated Metabolife, now called Metabolife Ultra, contains different ingredients, namely guarana seed extract (a.k.a. caffeine) and "SuperCitrimax® Garcinia fruit extract" (a.k.a. hydroxycitric acid). Caffeine has a variety of side effects, including increased heart rate. Research on hydroxycitric acid has been mostly focused on animal subjects and has conflicting results regarding [health effects](#), [2] so it's difficult to determine how it might impact a human — more research is needed. Regardless, it's always best to carefully evaluate advertiser's claims for products before taking them. Metabolife Ultra appears to be safer than the prior version which contained ephedrine. However, labels on the boxes aren't always accurate because they're not citing individual studies, so it might be helpful to research the individual ingredients.

Manufacturers say Metabolife Ultra is a mixture of "the finest natural herbs" that burn fat by raising the body's metabolism, increasing energy levels, and suppressing appetite. They recommend consulting a health care provider if using the product to lose weight. They also warn against using Metabolife if pregnant, nursing, or sensitive to caffeine. As with other dietary supplements intended for weight loss, these products aren't a quick fix and are often suggested by medical professionals to be used in conjunction with other healthy lifestyle behaviors (adequate quality sleep, [eating a balanced diet](#) [3], regular physical activity). When part of a routine, these behaviors not only help with weight loss and maintenance but can also provide many other health benefits.

Finally, before you make any decisions, you may consider why you want to drop 15 to 20 pounds. Do you feel it'll help improve your energy levels? Help improve your stamina or make you more competitive athletically? Do you want to look more like actors and models? Are you getting pressure from a friend or loved one? It might help to discuss your goals with a health care provider to determine why and how you're interested in shedding pounds and if it would be appropriate for you. You may also seek out a registered dietitian to speak about your goals and talk about how you can modify your eating plan to help lose or maintain a healthy weight. Once you identify the reasons behind your weight loss , you may decide that you don't need a dietary supplement to maintain healthy weight.

Good luck in figuring out what's healthiest for you!

Alice!

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