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GABA Supplements Review

Does GABA Work As a Supplement?



Medically reviewed and edited by Tod Cooperman, M.D.

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Watch the video

Summary

- **What does GABA do and do supplements work?** GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid) is a natural "inhibitory neurotransmitter," meaning it blocks impulses between the nerve cells, resulting in a calming effect. Many *medications* (such as gabapentin and certain benzodiazepines) prescribed for insomnia and restless legs syndrome, stress and anxiety, epilepsy, and other conditions, work by affecting GABA activity. **However, taking GABA as supplement does not significantly increase GABA levels in the brain** and has not been shown to provide much benefit for epilepsy, insomnia or stress, or cognitive performance, and the effects, if any, are temporary. GABA also affects processes that control blood pressure and muscle mass, so it has been evaluated for hypertension and muscle building (see [What It Does](#)).
- **What dose of GABA is used?** In clinical trials, GABA has typically been taken at a dose of 100 to 800 mg per day, although higher and lower doses have been used (see [Dosage](#)).
- **What did CL's tests and review of GABA supplements show?** In laboratory testing, all of the products were shown to provide their listed amounts of GABA without any significant contamination with heavy metals, such as lead. However, the cost to obtain 250 mg of GABA ranged widely, from just 1 cent to \$1.60, although higher cost does not mean higher quality or, necessarily, higher likelihood of benefit (see [What CL Found](#) and [How Products Were Evaluated](#)).
- **What is the best GABA supplement?** Among 12 CL Approved products, CL selected [Top Picks](#) for low, medium, high, and very high-dose GABA representing good quality and value.
- **How to take GABA?** GABA should be taken with water and need not be taken with food. As any therapeutic effects appear to be temporary, take within one hour of expected benefit. As GABA may directly irritate the throat if taken as a liquid at high dosage, capsules may be preferred to dissolving tablets, liquids, and powders stirred in liquids (see ConsumerTips: [How to Take](#)).



- **GABA safety and side effects:** At doses of 300 mg or more, mild side effects, such as abdominal discomfort, headache and drowsiness, have been reported. As GABA may lower blood pressure, it may be unsafe to use with blood pressure-lowering drugs. The long-term safety of GABA supplements remains uncertain (see [Concerns and Cautions](#)).

Products tested in 2023

What It Is:

GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid) is a natural "inhibitory neurotransmitter," meaning it blocks impulses between the nerve cells, resulting in a calming effect. GABA also affects processes that control blood pressure and muscle mass, so it has been evaluated for high blood pressure and building muscle.

Many medications (such as gabapentin (Horizant, Neurontin), benzodiazepines, such as diazepam (Valium) and others) prescribed for sleep disorders such as insomnia and [restless legs syndrome \(RLS\)](#), stress and anxiety, epilepsy, and other conditions work by affecting GABA activity in the brain. However, as discussed below, taking an oral GABA supplement does not appear to increase GABA levels in the brain.

In addition to being produced naturally in the nervous system (from enzymatic conversion of the amino acid glutamate), GABA is also found in very small amounts in some plants and fermented foods (GABA in such foods is considered "natural" GABA). Foods containing this natural GABA have been marketed in Japan.

The GABA found in most supplements is synthesized by bacterial fermentation (often with glutamate added as a substrate) and is considered to be "biosynthetic" (trademarked as PharmaGABA or Pharma GABA from Pharma Foods International Japan). GABA can also be produced by chemical synthesis ("synthetic GABA"), but this is considered to be more costly than biosynthetic synthesis, so is likely not the source of GABA in most supplements.

What It Does:

Despite the important role that GABA normally plays in the brain, taking GABA orally does not significantly increase GABA levels in the brain (it is not clear if it can cross the blood-brain-barrier) ([Hepsomali, Front Neurosci 2020](#)). Consequently, it is not surprising that it has generally not been shown to provide much, if any, benefit for epilepsy, insomnia or stress. There is preliminary evidence that it may modestly lower systolic (but not diastolic) blood pressure and it may help increase muscle mass (but not strength) when taken along with protein supplementation.

Epilepsy

In people with epilepsy, low brain levels of GABA have been associated with poor seizure control ([Petroff, Ann Neurol 1996](#)). For this reason, there has been interest in GABA to reduce seizures in people with this condition. However, a study among 12 people with epilepsy found that giving extremely high doses of GABA (0.8 grams/kg daily – equaling about 56 grams or 56,000 mg for an adult) did *not* reduce the number of seizures in most patients, although there was some benefit observed in four participants, all of whom were children ([Boonstra, Front Psychol 2015](#)). Based on this evidence, GABA supplementation is unlikely to be beneficial in adults, but it may have benefit in children, possibly due to the increased blood-brain barrier permeability to GABA in children. A [clinical trial](#) evaluating the efficacy of GABA in children with epilepsy is ongoing, but the study is not expected to be completed until December 2028.

Insomnia

It has been suggested that GABA may help induce and maintain sleep by blocking signals to nerve cells that promote arousal. However, there is limited evidence of benefit of GABA for inducing sleep, and no strong evidence of benefit for maintaining sleep.

A study in Korea among 40 middle-aged adults with at least one symptom of insomnia found that taking a fermented rice germ extract containing 300 mg of GABA once daily one hour before sleep for 4 weeks did *not* improve total sleep time, rapid-eye-movement (REM) sleep, sleep efficacy, or quality of sleep compared to placebo, although time to fall asleep was slightly improved ([Byun, J Clin Neurol 2018](#)). Similarly, a study in Japan among healthy people found that taking 100 mg of GABA (*PharmaGABA*, Pharma Foods International) 30 minutes before sleep shortened time to fall asleep by 5 minutes, but there was no significant improvement in sleep efficiency, frequency of nighttime awakenings, or REM sleep time compared to placebo ([Yamatsu, Food Sci Biotechnol 2016](#)).

The authors of a study in Brazil among 26 sedentary women (average age 44) who were overweight, concluded that taking that taking 200 mg of GABA once daily 30 minutes before bedtime for about 8 weeks "enhanced habitual sleep efficiency" — i.e., the ratio of time spent sleeping to total time spent in bed. However, the authors failed to show whether or not this was statistically significant compared to results among those given placebo. Participants in both the GABA and placebo groups participated in 50-minute exercise sessions three times weekly as part of the study. It is unclear from the study whether either group showed improvements in other sleep measures, including sleep quality, time to fall asleep, sleep duration, sleep disturbances, use of sleep medication or daytime dysfunction: These outcomes appear to have been evaluated, but the results were not reported. Participants in both groups showed modest improvements in depression scores compared to baseline but it was not reported if between-group differences were statistically significant ([Guimarães, J Diet Suppl 2024](#)).

Restless legs syndrome (RLS)

Preliminary clinical research suggests that brain levels of GABA are similar in people with and without RLS, although there is some evidence linking higher or lower levels of GABA in certain parts of the brain (the thalamus and cerebellum, respectively) with increased severity of self-reported symptoms of RLS ([Winkelman, Sleep Med 2014](#)). Drugs that affect GABA activity in the brain (gabapentin (Neurontin), alprazolam (Xanax), diazepam (Valium), are sometimes prescribed to help reduce the symptoms of RLS. There do not appear to be any studies on the effects of GABA supplements on frequency or severity of symptoms in people with RLS.

Stress and Anxiety

There is some evidence that taking GABA may improve certain markers of stress and anxiety (specifically alpha and beta brain waves seen in an electroencephalogram or EEG), but there is no strong evidence that taking GABA improves patient-reported aspects of mood during stressful situations.

A study in Japan among 13 healthy young adults (ages 21 to 35) found that taking a single dose of 100 mg of GABA (*PharmaGABA*, Pharma Foods International) prior to sitting quietly with eyes closed increased alpha brain waves (which are associated with calmness) and decreased beta brain waves (which tend to increase with agitation and anxiousness) compared to control (water), suggesting that GABA may help induce relaxation and reduce anxiety ([Abdou, Biofactors 2006](#)).

Another study among 63 adults (average age 25) found that mental stress testing (which consisted of two mental stress tasks conducted at four intervals over 90 minutes) decreased both alpha and beta brain waves throughout the testing. Taking 100 mg of GABA 10 minutes before participating in the testing lessened the decrease in alpha and beta brain waves compared to placebo. However, self-reported improvement in mood during testing was limited. Although taking GABA slightly attenuated the decrease in vigor-activity score during testing compared to placebo, there were no significant between-group differences in self-reported feelings of fatigue, relaxation, arousal, pressure or tension based on the Visual Analogue Scale ([Yoto, Amino Acids 2012](#)).

Health Canada permits GABA to be sold as a health product with the claim "Helps to temporarily promote relaxation" at a dosage of 50-3,000 milligrams per day, although it indicates that dosing should not to exceed 750 milligrams per single dose and products providing 300 mg or more GABA per day must include a statement advising the user to consult a health care provider for use beyond 4 weeks. ([Natural Health Products Ingredients Database, Health Canada, 2021](#)).

A review of clinical studies of GABA supplements and foods containing GABA concluded that "there is limited evidence for stress and very limited evidence for sleep benefits of oral GABA intake." ([Hepsomali, Front Neurosci 2020](#))

Cognitive function

GABA plays a role in many cognitive processes in the brain, including motor learning, control and response, and visual attention. Higher levels of GABA in the prefrontal cortex of the brain have also been linked to better memory performance in older adults at high risk for Alzheimer's disease ([Murari, Cerebral Cortex Comm 2020](#)). However, it's not clear that GABA, taken as a supplement, has substantial benefit. Clinical trials, all of which evaluated the effects of a single dose of GABA on cognitive function, have focused on young healthy adults, and results have been mixed.

Two small studies among university students (average age 19) found that a single, 800-mg dose of GABA (as a powder added to orange juice) taken 30 minutes before cognitive testing slightly improved certain measures of cognitive function, including reaction times to visual and auditory stimuli and temporal attention, but did not improve spatial attention, compared to placebo ([Steenbergen, Sci Rep 2015](#); [Leonte, Brain Cogn 2018](#)).

However, a study among 48 university students (average age 22) found that a single, 800-mg dose of GABA, taken alone or in addition to 2,000 mg of L-tyrosine (an [amino acid sometimes promoted](#) for improving cognitive function) worsened performance on a test of cognitive flexibility (the ability to comprehend and respond to conflicting stimuli — i.e., reading the word "blue" that is printed in red ink) compared to placebo ([Lim, J Clin Med 2021](#)).

Hypertension

Some research suggests that GABA may slightly lower systolic blood pressure in people with mild hypertension, although the exact mechanism of this effect is unclear.

One study among 39 people with mild hypertension found that taking a fermented milk product providing 10 mg of GABA daily for 12 weeks reduced systolic blood pressure by roughly 14 mmHg compared to placebo, but there was no significant between-group difference in diastolic blood pressure ([Inoue, Eur J Clin Nutr 2003](#)). Similarly, a study among 80 people with high blood pressure or borderline hypertension found that taking a chlorella supplement providing 20 mg of GABA twice daily for 12 weeks modestly reduced systolic blood pressure compared to placebo, with greater reduction seen in patients with borderline hypertension compared to high-normal blood pressure, but there was no significant improvement in diastolic blood pressure ([Shimada, Clin Exp Hypertens 2009](#)).

Muscle building

GABA seems to increase blood levels of growth hormone, which may help promote protein synthesis. Because of this effect, GABA has been evaluated for enhancing muscle mass increases in people participating in resistance training. However, evidence of benefit is modest, at best.

One study in resistance-trained men found that taking 3 grams (3,000 mg) of GABA prior to exercise increased human growth hormone levels at rest by 400% and after exercise by 200% ([Powers, Med Sci Sports Exerc 2008](#)).

A study among 21 healthy men found that taking 100 mg of GABA along with 10 grams of whey protein once daily (either 15 minutes after training or before sleep on non-exercise days) for 12 weeks increased whole body fat-free mass compared to taking whey protein alone, but there was no significant between-group difference in upper or lower-body strength, weight, body mass index, or fat mass. Interestingly, men taking GABA + whey protein showed increased resting blood concentrations of growth hormone after 4 and 8 weeks (but not 12 weeks) compared to baseline, but this increase was not significant compared to the group taking whey protein only ([Sakashita, J Clin Med Res 2019](#)).

A study among 26 sedentary women with obesity (average age 44) showed that taking 200 mg of GABA once daily, 30 minutes before bedtime, for 12 weeks while participating in aerobic and strength training for 150 minutes weekly did not significantly affect growth hormone levels, nor did it improve handgrip strength, core strength (based on number of sit-ups that could be done in one minute), body composition, or resting blood pressure and heart rate compared to placebo ([Pires, Clin Nutr ESPEN 2025](#)).

Quality Concerns and Tests Performed:

No U.S. government agency is responsible for routinely testing GABA supplements for their contents or quality. For this Review, ConsumerLab.com purchased and evaluated GABA supplements sold in the U.S. and Canada to determine whether they contained the amounts of GABA stated on their labels. All products were tested for potential contamination with lead, cadmium, arsenic and mercury. In addition, all regular tablets were tested to determine if they would properly disintegrate. (See [How Products Were Evaluated](#) for information on testing methods and passing score.)

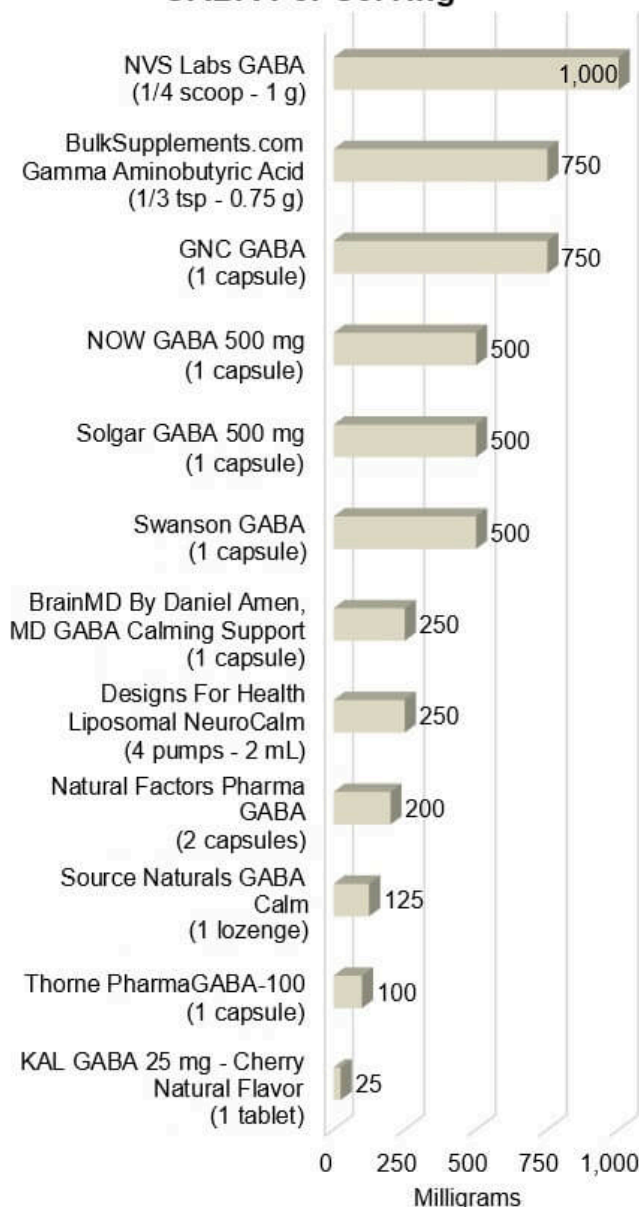
What CL Found:

All 10 of the GABA supplements ConsumerLab.com selected for review passed testing for the listed amount of GABA and heavy metal contamination, as did two products that underwent the same testing and review and were Approved through ConsumerLab.com's voluntary [Quality Certification Program](#).

With that said, there is a great amount of diversity among products in terms of dose and cost -- as discussed below.

Wide range of dosage strengths

It's important to know the dose of GABA that you want, because, as shown below, amounts of GABA in the suggested serving of each product ranged *40-fold* from just 25 mg per tablet of *KAL GABA 25* to 1,000 mg in $\frac{1}{4}$ scoop of *NVS Labs GABA*. As discussed in the [ConsumerTips](#) section, clinical studies with GABA have used daily doses of about 10 to 20 mg for effects on blood pressure, but typically 100 to 800 mg or more for other uses, such as reducing stress, and improving rest or cognition.

GABA Per Serving*

* Based on confirmed listed amount.

Cost

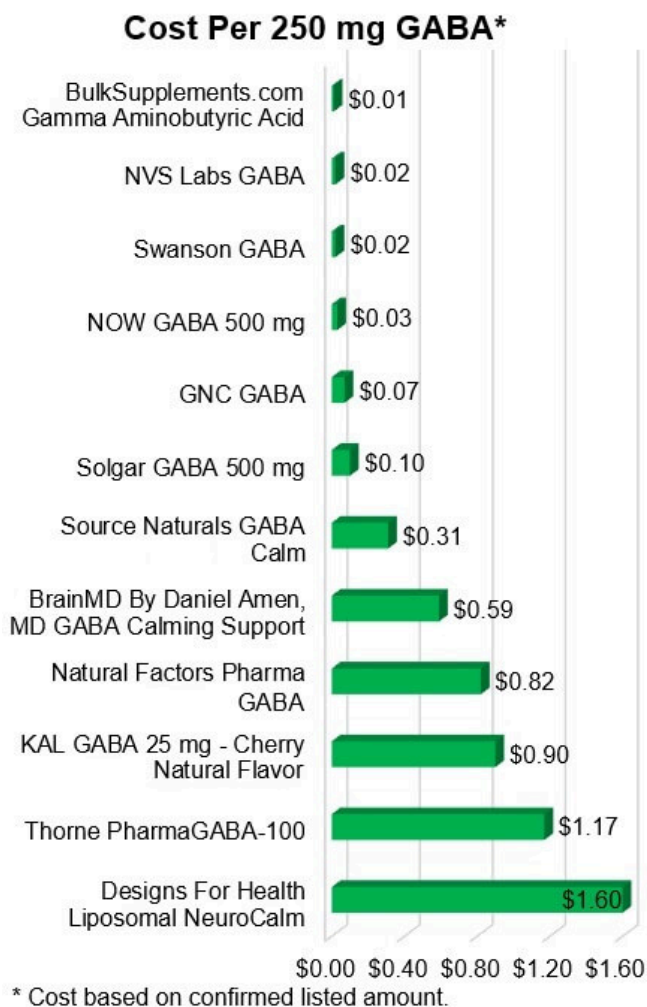
There were *major* differences in cost among the GABA supplements: The cost to obtain 250 mg of GABA ranged from only 1 cent to \$1.60, as shown in the graph below.

The lowest-cost products were powders (*BulkSupplements.com* and *NVS Labs*) and some capsules (*Swanson*, *NOW*, and *GNC*), that generally provide only GABA (*NOW* also contains vitamin B6).

More expensive capsules were "calming" formulas that contained additional ingredients: *Source Naturals GABA Calm* (125 mg of GABA per capsule with glycine, N-acetyl-L-tyrosine, and taurine) and *BrainMD GABA Calming Support* (250 mg of GABA per capsule with [vitamin B6](#), lemon balm extract, [L-theanine](#), and [magnesium](#)); however, we are not aware of clinical trials with these combinations to demonstrate a calming effect, and there is no clear evidence that any one of these ingredients reduces stress or related symptoms – although vitamin B6 *deficiency* has been associated with stress responses in women, and there is preliminary evidence that L-theanine reduces stress response.

The most expensive sources of GABA included two products that listed "Pharma GABA" as their source of GABA. Pharma GABA is a trademarked GABA ingredient produced by bacterial fermentation -- although it is quite possible that the GABA in other products is also produced with this method. These two products, *Natural Factors* and *Thorne*, each provide 100 mg of Pharma GABA per capsule, but

Natural Factors is 30% less expensive than *Thorne*. The other expensive sources of GABA were special formulations of GABA such as a liposomal liquid (*Designs for Health*) or dissolving tablets (*KAL* and *Source Naturals*) — although *it is not known if these provide any better uptake of GABA into the body or into the brain*. Note that while *KAL* is a relatively expensive source of GABA, it is the only low-dose product in the Review and the cost per dissolving tablet (25 mg of GABA) is not particularly high (9 cents).



Taste

We tasted all of the products that were not capsules. In general, the two dissolving tablets tasted fine, but we preferred *KAL*, which dissolved quickly and had a cherry flavor, while *Source Naturals* dissolved slowly and had a somewhat chalky taste. The liquid spray from *Designs for Health* had an unpleasant chemical taste and irritated the throat. The two powders had no perceptible taste when mixed in water (1/4 teaspoon in 4 fl. oz. of water) but the powders themselves had a very slight sweetness and citrus flavor — although GABA powders should *not* be consumed directly as powders as they may irritate the throat.

Top Pick:

As all of the tested products provided their listed amounts of GABA without notable contamination from heavy metals, and it is unknown if any particular GABA form, formula, or formulation provides better absorption, bioavailability, penetration of the blood-brain-barrier, or efficacy, than others, our choice of *Top Picks* came down to dosage, cost, and safety.

Our **Top Picks** among GABA supplements, for the reasons explained below, are:

- Low-dose: **KAL GABA 25 mg**

Although the GABA from this product is probably not absorbed in the mouth, but in the gut, if you want an easy-to-take low dose of GABA, these small, quick-dissolving tablets each provide 25 mg for 9 cents and have a pleasant taste. Just be aware that they contain some sugar alcohols (mannitol and sorbitol) which may cause a little gas. Low doses of GABA may help slightly lower systolic blood pressure but they do not lower diastolic pressure and are lower in dose than what is typically taken for stress, rest, or cognition.

- Moderate-dose: **Natural Factors Stress-Relax Pharma GABA** (100 mg per capsule) and **Brain MD Calming Support** (250 mg per capsule).

We found moderate-dose products to be much more expensive than high-dose products, likely because they contain a branded form of GABA (Pharma GABA), as found in *Natural Factors*, or have additional ingredients or are special formulations. But none of these differences are of proven benefit in terms of effectiveness for stress or sleep. Among these moderate-dose products we have two *Top Picks*. The first is *Natural Factors Stress-Relax Pharma GABA*, which provides 100 mg of GABA (as Pharma GABA) for 33 cents (\$19.59 for 60 capsules), which is 30% lower in cost than *Thorne's* 100-mg capsule of Pharma GABA. If you want a higher dose, *BrainMD GABA Calming Support* provides 250 mg per capsule and includes a large dose of vitamin B6 (471% of the Daily Value), as well as small amounts of lemon balm extract, L-theanine, and magnesium. *Brain MD* costs 59 cents per capsule (\$53.25 for 90 capsules), making it somewhat less expensive per milligram of GABA than *Natural Factors*.

Source Naturals dissolving tablets (or lozenges) are also less expensive than *Natural Factors*, providing 125 mg per tablet for just 16 cents, but the tablets dissolve slowly, have a somewhat chalky taste, and include sorbitol and mannitol, which can cause gas. We also did not care for *Designs for Health Liposomal NeuroCalm* liquid (250 mg of GABA per 4 pumps), as we found it to have an unpleasant chemical taste and was slightly irritating to throat.

- High-dose: **Swanson GABA** (500 mg/capsule for 4 cents)

Interestingly, the highest dose products were much less expensive than lower dose products. These include capsules from *Swanson* and *NOW* (each 500 mg per capsule) and *GNC* (750 mg per capsule). Among these, *Swanson GABA* is lowest in cost – just 4 cents per capsule – and is our *Top Pick*. However, as side effects (although mild) have been reported with doses of even 300 mg, it would seem prudent to first try a lower dose of GABA. To save money, if you are comfortable with [opening capsules](#) (you can just twist the two sides apart), you can lower the dose of these capsule by pouring off some of the powdered contents and then twisting the half-shells back together. For example, if you empty half the powder, you should get a dose of approximately 250 mg GABA – and you'll still have spent only 4 cents.

- Very-high dose and variable dose: **BulkSupplements.com Gamma Aminobutyric Acid**

The GABA powders are an inexpensive source of GABA, and the least expensive powder was *BulkSupplements.com Gamma Aminobutyric Acid* (GABA). A 750 mg serving (listed as 1/3 teaspoon, although ConsumerLab found the weight in 1/3 teaspoon to be closer to 900 mg) costs only 3 cents (\$22.96 for a 500-gram pouch). **Caution:** As GABA is a weak acid, it can irritate the throat, so, don't swallow the powder itself, but dilute it in water. In fact, even in water, a high dose (1,000 mg or more per day) may irritate the throat, so you may prefer to take capsules, such as *Swanson's*, instead.

Test Results by Product:

Listed alphabetically below – grouped as capsules/tablets (including one lozenge) or powders/liquids – are the test results for 12 GABA

supplements. ConsumerLab.com selected 10 of these products, and two (indicated with CL flasks) were tested at the request of their distributors through CL's voluntary [Quality Certification Program](#) and are included for having passed testing.

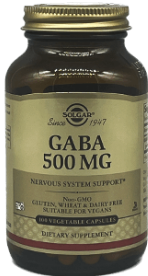
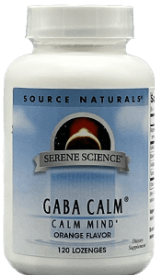
Shown for each product, in the 2nd column, is the labeled amount and form of GABA per labeled serving and the daily serving size. A checkmark indicates that we found the listed amount within an acceptable margin. The third column shows if a product passed or failed tests for heavy metal contamination, as well as noting the suggested daily servings on the label, pill size, and taste description. The calculated cost to obtain 250 mg of GABA is provided in the 4th column along with price information. Notable features regarding allergens and significant amounts of other active ingredients are noted in the 5th column, and the full list of ingredients for each product is shown in the final column.

Results of ConsumerLab.com Testing of Gamma AminoButyric Acid (GABA) Supplements					
(Price Checks are not included in printed reviews)					
Approval Status Product Name	Claimed Amount of GABA Suggested Serving	Heavy Metals Directions Pill Size	Cost Per Suggested Serving [Cost Per 250 mg of GABA] Price	Notable Features	Full List of Ingredients Per Serving
GABA Capsules & Lozenges:					

APPROVED Top Pick for moderate-dose BrainMD By Daniel Amen, MD GABA Calming Support  Dist. by BrainMD	1 vegan capsule GABA: 250 mg ✓ (Found: 257.7 mg)	Heavy Metals: Pass Adults, take 1 to 6 capsules daily with water, between meals. Dosing for children should be directed by a nutritionally informed physician. Large vegan capsule	\$0.59/vegan capsule [\$0.59] \$53.25/90 vegan capsules	Vitamin B6 8 mg, magnesium 33 mg, lemon balm extract 50 mg & L-theanine 33 mg per vegan capsule <i>Dairy Free. Gluten Free. Sugar Free. Corn Free. Soy Free. No Artificial Coloring. Nut Free. Egg Free. Yeast Free. No Artificial Flavoring.</i>	1 vegan capsule Vitamin B6 (as pyridoxine HCl and pyridoxal-5-phosphate) 8 mg, Magnesium (as glycinate and malate) 33 mg, GABA (Gamma-Amino Butyric Acid) 250 mg, Lemon Balm Extract (<i>Melissa officinalis</i>, leaf) 50 mg, L-Theanine 33 mg. Other Ingredients: Vegetable cellulose Additional Information 1 vegan capsule Vitamin B6 (as pyridoxine HCl and pyridoxal-5-phosphate) 8 mg, Magnesium (as glycinate and malate) 33 mg, GABA (Gamma-Amino Butyric Acid) 250 mg, Lemon Balm Extract (<i>Melissa officinalis</i>, leaf) 50 mg, L-Theanine 33 mg. Other Ingredients: Vegetable cellulose (vegetarian capsule), microcrystalline cellulose, magnesium stearate, silicon dioxide.
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APPROVED GNC GABA   Dist. by General Nutrition Corporation	1 capsule GABA: 750 mg ✓ (Found: 747.8 mg)	Heavy Metals: Pass Take one to three capsules daily. Large capsule	\$0.22/capsule [\$0.07] \$19.99/90 capsules	<i>No Sugar, No Artificial Colors, No Artificial Flavors, Sodium Free, No Wheat, Gluten Free, No Corn, No Soy, No Dairy.</i>	1 capsule gamma-Aminobutyric Acid 750 mg. Other Ingredients: Gelatin.
APPROVED Top Pick for low-dose KAL® GABA 25 mg - Cherry Natural Flavor  Mfd. by Nutraceutical Corp.	1 micro tablet GABA: 25 mg ✓ (Found: 25.5 mg)	Heavy Metals: Pass Dissolve one ActivMelt™ micro tablet on the tongue daily, preferably with a meal. Medium micro tablet <i>Taste: Thin, white, round tablet with a slight sweet and cherry flavor that dissolves quickly in the mouth.</i>	\$0.09/micro tablet [\$0.90] \$10.79/120 micro tablet	<i>Vegetarian.</i>	1 micro tablet GABA (Gamma Amino Butyric Acid) 25 mg. Other Ingredients: Mannitol Starch Complex (from non-GMO corn), Cellulose, Natural Cherry Flavor with Other Natural Flavors, Sorbitol, Magnesium Stearate, Citric Acid, Stevia (leaf extract), Malic Acid, Silica and Polysaccharides (from non-GMO soy).

➤ APPROVED ➤ Top Pick for moderate-dose Natural Factors® Pharma GABA®  Mfd. by Natural Factor Canada	2 vegetarian capsules GABA: 200 mg ✓ (as Pharma GABA) (Found: 206 mg)	Heavy Metals: Pass 1 - 2 capsules 3 times per day or as directed by a health professional. Large vegetarian capsule	\$0.65/2 vegetarian capsules [\$0.82] \$19.59/60 vegetarian capsules	<i>Contains no artificial colors, preservatives, or sweeteners; no dairy, sugar, wheat, gluten, soy, egg, fish, shellfish, animal products, salt, tree nuts, or GMOs. Suitable for vegetarians/ vegans.</i>	2 vegetarian capsules Pharma GABA® Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid 200 mg. Other Ingredients: Rice powder, vegetarian capsule (carbohydrate gum [cellulose], purified water), magnesium stearate (vegetable grade), silica.
➤ APPROVED ➤ NOW® GABA 500 mg  Dist. by NOW Foods	1 veg capsule GABA: 500 mg ✓ (Found: 567.2 mg)	Heavy Metals: Pass Take 1 capsule 2 to 3 times daily as needed, preferably with juice or water on an empty stomach. Large veg capsule	\$0.06/veg capsule [\$0.03] \$12.99/200 veg capsules	Vitamin B-6 2 mg per veg capsule <i>Kosher. Non-GMO.</i> Precaution: Not manufactured with wheat, gluten, soy, corn, milk, egg, fish, shellfish or tree nut ingredients. Produced in a GMP facility that processes other ingredients containing these allergens.	1 veg capsule Vitamin B-6 (from Pyridoxine HCl) 2 mg, GABA (Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid) 500 mg. Other Ingredients: Hypromellose (cellulose capsule), Rice Flour, Silicon Dioxide and Stearic Acid (vegetable source).

APPROVED Solgar® GABA 500 mg  Mfd. by Solgar, Inc.	1 vegetable capsule GABA: 500 mg ✓ (Found: 484 mg)	Heavy Metals: Pass As a dietary supplement for adults, take one (1) vegetable capsule up to two times daily, between meals, or as directed by a healthcare practitioner. Large vegetable capsule	\$0.19/vegetable capsule [\$0.10] \$18.74/100 vegetable capsule	<i>Certified Gluten free GFCO.org® seal.</i> <i>Kosher Suitable for Vegetarians. Free Of: Gluten, Wheat, Dairy, Soy, Yeast, Sugar, Sodium, Artificial Flavor, Sweetener and Color.</i>	1 vegetable capsule GABA (gamma aminobutyric acid) 500 mg. Other Ingredients: Dicalcium Phosphate, Vegetable Cellulose, Microcrystalline Cellulose, Vegetable Magnesium Stearate, Silica.
APPROVED Source Naturals® GABA Calm®  Dist. by Source Naturals, Inc.	1 lozenge GABA: 125 mg ✓ (Found: 137.3 mg)	Heavy Metals: Pass 1 lozenge, 1 to 3 times daily. For best results, allow to dissolve in the mouth before swallowing. Medium lozenge <i>Taste: Thick, white, round tablet with a slight sweet and sour chalky taste that dissolves slowly in the mouth.</i>	\$0.16/lozenge [\$0.31] \$18.89/120 lozenges	Magnesium 5 mg, glycine 50 mg, N-acetyl L-tyrosine 25 mg & taurine 20 mg per lozenge Precaution: Warning: Contains tyrosine. Not to be used with MAO inhibitor drugs.	1 lozenge Magnesium (as magnesium amino acid complex) 5 mg, GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid) 125 mg, Glycine 50 mg, N-Acetyl L-Tyrosine 25 mg, Taurine 20 mg. Other Ingredients: Sorbitol, mannitol, stearic acid, modified cellulose gum, natural orange flavor, and magnesium stearate.

APPROVED Top Pick for high-dose Swanson® GABA  Dist. by Swanson Health Products	1 capsule GABA: 500 mg ✓ (Found: 578.7 mg)	Heavy Metals: Pass Take one capsule per day with water. Large capsule	\$0.04/capsule [\$0.02] \$4.29/100 capsules	None.	1 capsule GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid) 500 mg. Other Ingredients: Gelatin, magnesium stearate.
APPROVED Thorne® PharmaGABA-100  Mfd. by Thorne Research	1 capsule GABA: 100 mg ✓ (as Pharma GABA) (Found: 111.3 mg)	Heavy Metals: Pass Take 1 capsule one to three times daily or as recommended by your health-care practitioner. Large capsule	\$0.47/capsule [\$1.17] \$28.00/60 capsules	None.	1 capsule Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid (GABA) 100 mg. Other Ingredients: Microcrystalline Cellulose, Hypromellose (derived from cellulose) capsule, Magnesium Citrate, Calcium Laurate.
GABA Powders & Liquid:					

APPROVED Top Pick for very-high dose and variable dose BulkSupplements.com® Gamma Aminobutyric Acid (GABA)  Dist. by BulkSupplements.com	1/3 tsp [750 mg] GABA: 750 mg ✓ (Found: 744.8 mg)	Heavy Metals: Pass Take 750 mg (about 1/3 tsp) once or twice daily, or as directed by a physician. <i>Taste: White, powdery crystals with a slightly sweet and citrus taste, but no taste as 1/4 teaspoon dissolved in 4 fl. oz. of water.</i>	\$0.03 per 1/3 tsp [\$0.01] \$22.96/17.6 oz [500 g] pouch (approx. 667 servings)	Free of: Added Sugar, Soy, Dairy, Yeast, Gluten, Additives.	1/3 tsp Gamma Aminobutyric Acid 750 mg. Other Ingredients: None.
APPROVED but unpleasant taste Designs For Health® Liposomal NeuroCalm™  Dist. by Designs for Health, Inc.	4 pumps [2 mL] GABA: 250 mg ✓ (Found: 281.9 mg)	Heavy Metals: Pass Take 2 mL (approx. 4 pumps) and hold in mouth for 30 seconds before swallowing or as directed by your health-care practitioner. <i>Taste: Clear liquid with an unpleasant, chemical taste -- somewhat like rubbing alcohol but slightly bitter sweet. Irritates the throat.</i>	\$1.60/4 pumps [\$1.60] \$39.95/1.7 fl oz [50 mL] bottle (approx. 25 servings)	L-Theanine 100 mg per 4 pumps <i>Does not contain gluten, dairy, soy protein, or GMOs.</i>	4 pumps gamma-Aminobutyric acid (GABA) 250 mg, L-Theanine 100 mg. Other Ingredients: Water, glycerine, ethanol, phospholipids (from sunflower lecithin), tocopherols, natural mixed tocopherols.

APPROVED NVS Labs® GABA  Dist. by NutriVitaShop	1/4 scoop [1,000 mg] GABA: 1,000 mg ✓ (Found: 977 mg)	Heavy Metals: Pass Take 1,000 mg (1/4 scoops) 1 to 3 times per day preferably on an empty stomach, or as directed by your qualified health consultant. <i>Taste: White, powdery crystals with a slightly sweet and citrus taste, but no taste as 1/4 teaspoon dissolved in 4 fl. oz. of water.</i>	\$0.07 per 1/4 scoop [\$0.02] \$16.95/8.8 oz [250 g] jar (approx. 250 servings)	None.	1/4 scoop Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid (nonGMO) 1,000 mg. Other Ingredients: None.
Unless otherwise noted, information about the products listed above is based on the samples purchased by ConsumerLab.com (CL) for this Product Review. The samples are from a single lot of the respective product. Be aware that there may lot-to-lot variation in products, particularly natural products. Manufacturers may change ingredients and label information at any time, so be sure to check labels carefully when evaluating the product you use or buy as it may be different from the product we tested. Manufacturers may also change ingredient suppliers, which can affect product quality. Pricing can change over time and vary based on retailer, promotions, and other factors. The information contained in this report is based on the compilation and review of information from product labeling and analytic testing. CL applies what it believes to be the most appropriate testing methods and standards. The information in this report does not reflect the opinion or recommendation of CL, its officers or employees. CL cannot assure the accuracy of information. Copyright ConsumerLab.com, LLC, 2025 All rights reserved. Not to be reproduced, excerpted, or cited in any fashion without the express written permission of ConsumerLab.com LLC					

Products tested in 2023

ConsumerTips™:

Dosage:

Clinical studies with GABA have used a wide range of dosage strength, as described in the [What It Does](#) section: About 10 to 20 mg of GABA daily for effects on blood pressure, 100 mg for effects on muscle, 100 to 800 mg for effects on stress, 800 mg for effects on cognition, and 3,000 mg for effects on growth hormone. However, as noted earlier, *the extent of these effects has been very limited*. One study of GABA for treating epilepsy involved giving tens of thousands of milligrams daily (about 56,000 mg for adults, and less for children), but was not effective and such a high dose does not seem advisable.

Health Canada permits GABA to be sold as a supplement with the claim "Helps to temporarily promote relaxation" at a dose of 50 to 3,000 mg per day; not to exceed 750 milligrams per day, although products providing 300 mg or more GABA per day must include statements advising the user to consult a health care provider for use beyond 4 weeks ([Natural Health Products Ingredients Database, Health Canada, 2021](#)).

How to take:

GABA should be taken with water or another beverage and need not be taken with food. It is water-soluble and rapidly absorbed from the gut. A 100-mg dose (of Pharma GABA) taken with water was found to raise normal levels of GABA in the blood by about 35% within 30 minutes – and then levels fall, possibly explaining why its effects appear to be short-term ([Yamatsu, Food Sci Biotechnol 2016](#)). GABA should be taken within an hour before desired effects.

As GABA is mildly acidic, it can irritate the throat if a high dose is taken in a form in that puts GABA in contact with the throat, such as a liquid or an orally dissolving tablet. For this reason, it may best to take GABA as a capsule if taking a high daily dose (over 1,000 mg per day), *as long as you don't have* [trouble swallowing capsules](#), since a stuck capsule could release its ingredients and injure the esophagus.

Concerns and Cautions:

Most studies have shown GABA to be safe when used in doses of 10 to 300 mg daily, short-term (i.e., 12 weeks or less), although mild side effects, such as **abdominal discomfort**, **headache**, and **drowsiness** have been reported at 300 mg ([Byun, J Clin Neurol 2018](#)). As noted above, when taken in a form in which GABA is in contact with the throat, it may irritate the throat. The safety of long-term supplementation with GABA is not known.

Because GABA may lower blood pressure, it may be unsafe to use with **blood pressure-lowering drugs** (e.g., thiazide diuretics, calcium channel blockers, ACE inhibitors, angiotensin II receptor antagonists (ARBs), beta blockers, etc.).

Health Canada requires that GABA products state that they are not to be used with alcohol and that a user should consult with a health care provider prior to use if pregnant or breastfeeding ([Natural Health Products Ingredients Database, Health Canada, 2021](#)).

Although antidepressants called **SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors)**, which include citalopram and fluoxetine, can increase concentrations of GABA *in the brain* ([Sanacora, Am J Psychiatry 2002](#); [Bhagwagar, Am J Psychiatry 2004](#)), GABA from supplements does not affect brain levels, and there does not appear to be any evidence of an interaction between SSRIs and GABA supplements. However, to be safe, people taking any antidepressants should talk with their doctor before starting GABA supplementation.

[+ 21 sources](#)

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[back to top](#)