MAGNESIUM SUPPLEMENT QUALITY CHECKLIST

A practical consumer guide to comparing magnesium glycinate and citrate

Purpose: Use this checklist to ask better questions about a magnesium supplement's label, testing and quality documentation. It is an educational tool—not a product certification or a medical recommendation.

1. Read the Supplement Facts panel

The amount of elemental magnesium is the key number for understanding how much magnesium the serving provides. The weight of the entire magnesium compound is not the same thing.

Check	What to look for
■ Elemental magnesium	Find the amount of magnesium per serving in the Supplement Facts panel.
■ Serving size	Check how many capsules, tablets or scoops make one serving.
■ Form named clearly	Look for the stated form (for example, magnesium citrate or magnesium glycinate).
■ Other ingredients	Review fillers, flavors, sweeteners, allergens and any additional active ingredients.
■ Daily amount	Compare the label's suggested serving with your own total intake and professional advice.

2. Understand the form—without assuming one is always better

Magnesium glycinate: Magnesium associated with glycine. Ask whether the manufacturer identifies the exact ingredient form and provides suitable identity and composition information. Do not assume every product marketed as “glycinate” has identical composition or chelation characteristics.

Magnesium citrate: A magnesium salt of citric acid. Citrate is relatively soluble and has evidence supporting absorption compared with magnesium oxide. It can also have a laxative effect in some people, particularly at higher supplemental intakes.

Important: “More absorbable” is not a universal ranking for every product, dose, person or outcome. Study design, formulation, dose and the comparator matter.

3. Ask what quality testing supports the product

A credible quality system should have specifications and appropriate tests or examinations for identity, purity, strength, composition and relevant contaminants. The exact analytical method should be suitable for the material and finished-product matrix.

Quality area	Useful question or evidence to request
■ Identity	How is the magnesium ingredient confirmed to be the stated form? Is the method appropriate and documented?
■ Assay / strength	Is elemental magnesium measured using a validated, suitable method? Does the result support the label claim?

■ Contaminants	Are relevant elemental impurities/contaminants controlled against defined specifications?
■ Microbiological quality	Are microbiological limits appropriate for the product type and risk?
■ Batch consistency	Are there batch records, release specifications and documented quality review?
■ Stability	Is shelf life supported by stability data in the marketed packaging?

4. Review a Certificate of Analysis (CoA)

A CoA is only as useful as its traceability, scope and supporting quality system. If a manufacturer shares one, check the following:

■	Product and ingredient name match the product being evaluated.
■	Batch or lot number matches the bottle or package, where a batch-specific CoA is claimed.
■	Test names, specifications, results and units are clearly shown.
■	The laboratory or testing organization is identified.
■	The report date and sample identity are clear.
■	The results cover the quality attributes being claimed—not just one convenient test.

5. Understand what GMP and third-party verification mean

GMP: Good manufacturing practices set expectations for controlled manufacturing, packaging, labeling, holding and quality systems. A GMP statement alone does not tell you every test result for the specific bottle in your hand.

Third-party verification: Check the actual scope of the program, product listing, testing and ongoing oversight. A logo or broad claim should not be treated as proof unless it can be verified with the issuing organization.

Do not confuse: FDA does not pre-approve dietary supplements for safety or effectiveness before they are marketed in the United States. Be cautious of claims that a supplement is "FDA approved."

6. Potential red flags

■ The label does not make the elemental magnesium amount clear.

■ The exact magnesium form or ingredient identity is vague.

■ The seller makes guaranteed claims about sleep, anxiety, detoxification or disease treatment.

■ A "lab tested" claim appears without meaningful details about what was tested.

■ A CoA cannot be linked to the relevant product or batch when batch-specific evidence is claimed.

■ The seller treats GMP, a facility registration or a logo as proof that FDA approved the product.

7. Safety reminder

Supplemental magnesium can cause diarrhea, nausea and abdominal cramping. Magnesium can interact with some medicines, including certain antibiotics and oral bisphosphonates. People with impaired kidney function or those taking regular medicines should ask a qualified healthcare professional before using magnesium supplements. This checklist does not provide individualized dosing advice.

Your quick decision record

Product / brand:	_____
Magnesium form:	_____

Elemental magnesium per serving:	_____
Batch / lot number (if available):	_____
Quality evidence reviewed:	_____
Questions still unanswered:	_____

Evidence notes and further reading

• NIH Office of Dietary Supplements. Magnesium: Fact Sheet for Health Professionals. ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Magnesium-HealthProfessional

• U.S. FDA. Small Entity Compliance Guide: Dietary Supplement Current Good Manufacturing Practice. FDA guidance

• U.S. FDA. Questions and Answers on Dietary Supplements. FDA consumer information

• Walker AF et al. Magnesium citrate bioavailability study. Magnesium Research. 2003;16(3):183–191. PubMed PMID 14596323

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Educational information only. This checklist is not an endorsement, certification, diagnosis or substitute for professional medical advice. Product requirements and regulatory rules vary by country.