



IAFF SAFETY ADVISORY

GLUTATHIONE

AUGUST 2026

GLUTATHIONE IS NOT AN FDA-APPROVED DRUG FOR POST-EXPOSURE FIRE FIGHTER DETOXIFICATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

This means that:

- There is **no** formal review verifying it is effective and safe.
- There is **no** requirement to report harmful side effects.
- Marketing and product labels are **not** reviewed for accuracy.

The **FDA has issued warnings regarding glutathione**, particularly the IV form, which poses the risk of contamination and severe adverse reactions.¹ Because glutathione is not an FDA-approved drug, consumers should be cautious about product safety and claims that glutathione can treat or prevent diseases. One pharmacy recently announced a recall of its glutathione due to contamination.²

Glutathione is marketed to fire fighters to remove toxins, but **there are no published scientific studies providing evidence that it reduces PFAS levels or oxidative stress associated with fire fighters' occupational exposures.**

SUPPLEMENTS CAN HARM YOUR HEALTH

Seemingly mundane supplements that researchers thought could lower disease risk have sometimes been shown to increase risk:

- **Beta-Carotene and Retinol Efficacy Trial (CARET)**: This clinical trial tested whether beta carotene and retinol (vitamin A) supplementation could reduce cancer risk in over 18,000 people at high risk for lung cancer. The CARET trial ended 21 months early because **participants taking the supplements had a 28% higher rate of lung cancer and 17% higher rate of dying** compared to participants in the placebo group.³
- **Selenium and Vitamin E Cancer Prevention Trial (SELECT)**: This clinical trial tested whether selenium and vitamin E supplements (taken separately or together) could reduce prostate cancer risk in over 35,000 men. The SELECT study found that **men who took vitamin E alone had a 17% higher rate of prostate cancer** compared to men in the placebo group.⁴



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Glutathione

What you should know



1 What is Glutathione?



A naturally occurring substance in the body



It is produced by the liver

ANTIOXIDANT

Glutathione is one of multiple antioxidants our bodies create and use to remove waste

2 Addressing Common Misconceptions

Misconception:

Glutathione supplements are an effective treatment option to reduce PFAS in the body.

Clarification:

Very little research exists. Only a small number of firefighters have been researched in a study where much of the data is not publicly available. Without knowing baseline levels, interpreting reported reductions is difficult.

Misconception:

Glutathione is an effective treatment option to decrease oxidative stress in the body.

Clarification:

The effect of glutathione on reducing oxidative stress is different in everyone, depending on factors such as genetics and other health conditions.

Misconception:

Glutathione supplements can increase levels in the body leading to positive health effects.

Clarification:

Raising glutathione levels with supplementation may be helpful in some cases, like for those who have non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. In this case, it has shown beneficial effects. But there is no clarity on how helpful supplements are in individuals without liver disease.

3 Things to Keep in Mind:

There is currently insufficient evidence about the long-term lung or overall health effects of glutathione interventions, including how long-term health effects can be impacted by job exposures.

There are no peer-reviewed, published, scientific studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of using glutathione supplements to cleanse the body.

Glutathione therapy methods are not approved by the FDA. All prescription drugs must pass a rigorous review process to prove safety and efficacy.

4 Increase Your Antioxidants:

Antioxidants play an important role in the body to remove waste, like byproducts of metabolism, and other environmental factors, like pollutants.

Here are some ways evidence shows us you can increase your antioxidant levels:



Limit alcohol consumption



Eat foods rich in antioxidants:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • salmon  | • apples  |
| • spinach  | • whole grains  |
| • avocado  | • carrots  |
| • strawberries  | |

Created by the UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center Office of Outreach and Education

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