The AG 5-Point Source Check

Before you trust an AI health answer, check the study.

An AI answer can sound certain and still rest on a paper that does not exist, an animal study, or research in people nothing like you. Use this page to check the source in about two minutes.

Write the claim here: _____

☐ 1. Does the paper actually exist?

How to do it: Click the citation. If there is no link, search the exact paper title on PubMed or Google Scholar.
Red flag: The link goes nowhere, the title cannot be found, or the link opens a different paper.

☐ 2. Is the journal real — and how old is the study?

How to do it: Check the journal name, publisher and year on the paper's page. Then search for a newer or larger study on the same question.
Red flag: The journal or year does not match, or one old, small study is treated as settled science.

☐ 3. What kind of study is it?

How to do it: Look for "randomised controlled trial," "systematic review," "observational study," "animal study" or "in vitro" in the abstract or methods.
Red flag: The research was in mice or cells, but the answer presents it as proof in people.

☐ 4. Who was studied — people like you?

How to do it: Find the participants section in the abstract: age, sex, health condition, activity level and number of people studied.
Red flag: The participants were 22-year-old athletes, while the advice is aimed at adults over 40 — or the study was in a condition you do not have.

☐ 5. Does the abstract actually back the claim?

How to do it: Read the abstract's results and conclusion. Compare the effect, dose, product, exercise, time period and outcome with what the AI answer claimed.
Red flag: The researchers say "may," "mixed" or "more research is needed," but the chatbot says it as a fact.

Worked example — a generic pattern

The AI answer says: "Studies show this supplement improves sleep."

- **Check 1:** Open the citation. Are you looking at the actual study the answer named?
- **Check 2:** Is the journal real, and is the study current enough for the claim being made?
- **Check 3:** Was it a human trial, a review of trials, or something weaker?
- **Check 4:** Were the participants adults with sleep problems — and were they anywhere near your age?
- **Check 5:** Did sleep actually improve by a meaningful amount, or does the abstract use cautious language the answer left out?

If you cannot complete a check, treat that part of the answer as unverified — not as false, and not as proven.

The two-minute rule

No source, no certainty. If an AI health answer matters to a decision about your body, ask for the study — then run the five checks before you act on it.

This checklist teaches source checking. It is educational information, not personal medical advice.