LIPOIC ACID-A PERFECT ANTIOXIDANT SUPPLEMENT
Multiple Benefits for Patients with Autoimmune Disorders

The dietary supplement lipoic acid, which is also known as alpha lipoic acid and R-dihydrolipoic acid, is a potent antioxidant first approved in Europe to reduce neurological complications of diabetes; lipoic acid also benefits vision and skin.

What is Lipoic Acid?

The dietary supplement lipoic acid is a potent antioxidant with many additional properties of value for patients with autoimmune disorders. Because lipoic acid is soluble in both water and fats, it is able to penetrate all of the tissues and cells of the body.

Reducing Oxidative Stress

The ability of lipoic acid to reduce oxidative stress makes it particularly beneficial for diabetes and other conditions in which free radicals circulate in the body and damage tissues. Oxidative stress in diabetes is responsible for many of its long-term complications. In Europe, lipoic acid is regulated as a drug and approved for the treatment of diabetic complications such as peripheral neuropathy.

Lipoic acid has the ability to neutralize or quench free radicals and it increases the effectiveness of other antioxidants, including vitamins C and E, coenzyme Q10 and the B vitamins. Lipoic acid is also able to help maintain normal blood sugar levels and supporting insulin sensitivity. These properties make lipoic acid an effective preventative treatment for metabolic syndrome and for maintaining cardiovascular health.

Cardiovascular Benefits

Used in combination with acetyl-l-carnitine (L-carnitine), lipoic acid reduces blood pressure and improves endothelial function of the brachial artery. Studies show that lipoic acid also helps reduce weight and improves levels of triglycerides and cholesterol.

Vision Benefits

In reducing oxidative stress, lipoic acid also helps prevent cataracts and the development of glaucoma. Along with vitamin E, lipoic acid is used to prevent retinal cell death in patients with retinitis pigmentosa.

Neurological Benefits

Because of its unique solubility, lipoic is able to pass the blood brain barrier and reach all parts of nerve cells. Studies show that lipoic acid reduces brain damage related to strokes and improved survival time. Evidence shows that lipoic acid offers protection against Alzheimer’s disease and helps protect against the acetylcholine deficiencies that
characterize Alzheimer’s disease. Lipoic acid has also been shown to reduce inflammation and neurological symptoms in patients with multiple sclerosis (MS).

**Reducing Bone Loss**

Lipoic acid is also reported to prevent bone loss in patients with osteoporosis and other degenerative bone conditions by reducing the oxidative stress that threatens to degrade bone density. Lipoic acid also suppresses the formation of bone-degrading osteoclast cells, and it inhibits the pro-inflammatory prostaglandin E2 and the inflammatory cytokine tumor necrosis factor-alpha.

**Reducing Toxins and Maintaining Healthy Skin**

Lipoic acid also chelates or binds to toxic metals and helps remove these compounds from the body. Lipoic acid has specifically been shown to protect against cadmium and arsenic poisoning. Lipoic acid also benefits the liver and has been reported to reduce conditions of wasting in patients with HIV infection. Added to creams, lipoic acid is reported to improve skin texture and decrease the appearance of photoaging.

**Recommended Doses**

The most potent form of lipoic acid is found in R-dihydrolipoic acid although preparations containing alpha-lipoic acid are also effective. Small amounts of lipoic acid are also found in dark leafy greens such as spinach and collards, broccoli, beef, and organ meats. Lipoic acid levels decline with age, making supplements necessary for most adults. In studies, supplements of lipoic acid ranging from 300-1800 mg daily are used. For best results, lipoic acid should be used in combination with biotin and vitamin B complex.

**Precautions**

Because lipoic acid lowers blood sugar, patients with diabetes should have their blood glucose levels monitored regularly while taking lipoic acid. They should also consult with their physicians to see if their anti-diabetic medication needs to be decreased before starting lipoic acid.

**Resources:**


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