

ALPHA LIPOIC ACID

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Introduction

Alpha lipoic acid is a fatty acid found naturally inside every cell in the human body. It is needed by the body to produce the energy for normal functions, and thus it converts blood sugar (glucose) into energy.

Alpha lipoic acid is also an antioxidant which is a substance that neutralizes free radicals.

Alpha lipoic acid is unique in that it functions in both water and fat, and is able to recycle antioxidants such as Vit C and glutathione after they have been depleted. Glutathione is an important antioxidant that helps the body eliminate potentially harmful substances, and alpha lipoic acid increases the formation of glutathione.

Alpha lipoic acid can be found in very small amounts in foods such as:

- Brewer's Yeast
- Broccoli
- Brussels Sprouts
- Organ Meats
- Peas
- Rice Bran
- Spinach

When using alpha lipoic acid supplements, for maximum absorption, they should be taken on an empty stomach.

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Alpha Lipoic Acid Benefits

Brain Function

Alpha lipoic acid can cross the blood-brain barrier, and pass easily into the brain; here it is thought to protect brain and nerve tissue by preventing free radical damage.

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Age-Related Conditions

Alpha lipoic acid, as an antioxidant, helps to neutralizes free radicals which can cause serious damage to cells. Free radical damage is thought to significantly contribute to the aging process and to chronic illness.

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Peripheral Neuropathy

Peripheral neuropathy can be caused by injury, nutritional deficiencies, chemotherapy, or by conditions such as diabetes, Lyme disease, alcoholism, shingles, thyroid disease, and kidney failure. Symptoms can include pain, burning, numbness, tingling, weakness, and itching.

Alpha lipoic acid works as an antioxidant in both water and fatty tissue, enabling it to enter all parts of the nerve cell and protect it from damage.

Studies suggest that alpha lipoic acid may help *Peripheral neuropathy. In one of the largest studies on the use of alpha lipoic acid, 181 people took 600 mg, 1,200 mg, or 1,800 mg of alpha lipoic acid a day, or a placebo. After 5 weeks, alpha lipoic acid improved symptoms. The dose that was best tolerated, while still providing benefit, was 600 mg, 1 x daily.

[*Peripheral neuropathy describes damage to the peripheral nervous system, which is the communications network that transmits information from the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord) to every other part of the body.]

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Other Conditions

Alpha lipoic acid has also been suggested for:

- Alzheimer's disease
- burning mouth syndrome
- Cataracts
- Glaucoma
- multiple sclerosis
- Stroke

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Contra Indications

Side effects of alpha lipoic acid may include headache, tingling or a "pins and needles" sensation, skin rash, or muscle cramps.

There have been a few reports in Japan of a rare condition called insulin autoimmune syndrome in people using alpha lipoic acid. The condition causes hypoglycaemia and antibodies directed against the body's own insulin without previous insulin therapy.

The safety of alpha lipoic acid in pregnant or nursing women, children, or people with kidney or liver disease is unknown.

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