

Why Take Lipoic Acid?

Benefits of Lipoic Acid

- Slows the aging process.
- Naturally increases energy.
- A more powerful free radical scavenger than any other nutrient.
- Prevents free radical damage in the brain, blood, in stored fat, and in the heart, pancreas, kidneys, bones, cartilage, liver, and in every cell and organ due to its unique water- and fat-soluble nature.
- Prevents wrinkling by protecting collagen in the skin.
- Recycles other antioxidants such as vitamin C, E and glutathione.
- Helps the body metabolize blood sugar better, thereby helping diabetics and hypoglycemics.
- Helps remove toxic metals from the body: mercury, arsenic, cadmium, and lead, and also lowers levels of copper and calcium when the body has too much of these minerals.
- Guards DNA and RNA from damage, thereby helping to prevent cancer.
- Helps the liver to heal from hepatitis and mushroom poisoning.

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Lipoic acid is one of the most important nutrients you can take to increase your health and energy. Lipoic acid performs a wider range of functions than virtually any other nutrient known. Research has shown lipoic acid to be:

- The most powerful antioxidant nutrient known
- A repairer of other antioxidants
- A remover of toxic metals
- A nutrient essential for healthy blood sugar metabolism

Lipoic acid, also known as alpha-lipoic acid, is a sulfur-containing substance manufactured in trace amounts by the body. As we age, however, we make less lipoic acid. And even the amount we make when young may not be enough to maintain optimal health. Those who want optimal wellness and especially those with chronic ailments will find lipoic acid to be an extremely helpful supplement.

Lipoic Acid: The Master Antioxidant

Your cells live in a tough environment. Pollution, stress, an imperfect diet, medications, and chemicals in the food supply and air all increase damage to our cells and increase our risk to a range of ailments. If we are going to survive to a ripe old age free from disease, we are going to have to surround our cells with key nutrients to guard them against the forces that age them. The most valuable cell protector of all? Lipoic acid.

Why? Because lipoic acid protects cells in many ways:

- It protects tissues in both water and fat soluble environments—something no other nutrient can do¹
- It repairs vitamins C, E and glutathione so that they too can protect the body²

No other nutrient can compare to this versatile range of protective benefits.

One of lipoic acid's unique features is its ability to increase levels of the most important antioxidant compound in the body, glutathione.³ Our health is directly connected to how much glutathione we have. Glutathione protects the body from free radicals produced by alcohol consumption, cigarette smoking, cancer chemotherapy, and exposure to damaging forms of radiation. Free radical damage is being investigated as a cause of many types of cancers. Free radicals damage cellular membranes and allow leakage and injury to the membrane, compromising the functional integrity of the cell. This leakage can then allow damage to the DNA – the blueprint of our cells – by free radicals. This changes the nature of the cell. Cells exposed to free radicals whose DNA has been changed can mutate and proliferate out of control by becoming cancerous. Lipoic acid may play a role with its antioxidant properties that discourages the development of cancer. Lipoic acid also has the potential to stop cells that are genetically programmed to one day become cancerous from ever becoming cancerous. Not bad for one nutrient!⁴

Free radicals Compounds that can damage the body and cause disease, found in smog, cigarette smoke, processed foods, and caused by stress and poor diet. Free radicals are also a normal byproduct of metabolism. **Antioxidants** Nutrients which neutralize free radicals. Examples: lipoic acid, vitamins C and E, carotenoids, CoQ10, zinc, and selenium.

Lipoic Acid: The Natural Energizer

Lipoic acid helps prepare fuel for the mitochondria, the powerhouse energy maker of the cell. The body cannot use sugar for energy without lipoic acid, and lipoic acid primes natural energizing pathways of the body. Lipoic acid also energizes the body by neutralizing free radicals, a major cause of fatigue. Many people feel a pleasant, natural increase in energy when they begin taking lipoic acid.

Lipoic Acid: An Essential Supplement for Diabetics

Diabetics benefit greatly from lipoic acid. Firstly, lipoic acid is crucial for helping optimize the function of the insulin receptors on body cells. When there is high free radical activity in the body, insulin receptors do not work well. Lipoic acid corrects this problem. Secondly, lipoic acid helps prevent and may reverse the complications of diabetes, including diabetic neuropathy, cataracts,⁵ tissue damage due to elevated blood sugar,⁶ and the build up of plaque in arteries.⁷

Lipoic Acid: Powerful Protector Against Many Toxins

One of the most dangerous things we can have in our body is toxic metals. Toxic metals can sit in our tissues for years and continually damage our body. A hair analysis can tell you whether you have elevated levels of toxic metals such as cadmium, lead, mercury, and aluminum. If you do, lipoic acid can bind toxic metals, neutralize them, and carry them to a place where they can be easily excreted from the body.⁸ Lipoic acid also protects the body from a range of other toxins, including medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®). Lipoic acid also protects against the damaging effects of alcohol, cleaning fluids, industrial chemicals, and fungal toxins (poisonous mushrooms).⁹

Summing Up

For optimal health, we need a healthy diet, regular exercise, stress management, spiritual wellness, and an optimized intake of all nutrients. Among the most important are vitamin C, E, folic acid, magnesium, zinc, selenium, carnitine, CoQ10, essential fatty acids, and lipoic acid. By working in concert with all of these important nutrients, lipoic acid boosts the power of all the other supplements you are taking. Whether you are seeking to prevent disease, or want to regain your health, lipoic acid helps your body on a wide variety of levels. We have only begun to examine all of the remarkable benefits of this extraordinary nutrient in this article. For further reading on lipoic acid, we recommend Dr. Burton Berkson's *The Alpha Lipoic Acid Breakthrough: The Superb Antioxidant That May Slow Aging, Repair Liver Damage, and Reduce the Risk of Cancer, Heart Disease, and Diabetes*. It is available in paperback from Prima publishing in all bookstores.

This article is for informational purposes only. For the management of your individual health problems, seek the guidance of your health-care practitioner.

References

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Common Questions about Lipoic Acid

Who should take lipoic acid?

Anyone who wants to optimize health, reduce risk to disease, increase energy, and slow the aging process.

Which conditions benefit from lipoic acid?

Diabetes and its complications, liver ailments including hepatitis, HIV, AIDS, immunosuppression, psoriasis, eczema, burns, skin cancer, MS, Lou Gehrig's and Parkinson's diseases, neurological disorders, rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus, scleroderma, autoimmune disease, macular degeneration, cataracts, heart disease, elevated cholesterol, stroke, radiation damage, and elevated levels of toxic metals.¹⁰

Which nutrients work synergistically with lipoic acid?

All nutrients, but most especially B complex vitamins, carnitine, and CoQ10. B vitamins, lipoic acid, CoQ10 and carnitine all work in the mitochondria of our cells to produce energy. By taking all these nutrients together, you greatly increase your cells' ability to create energy.

Is lipoic acid safe?

Lipoic acid is very safe and non-toxic. Diabetics should take lipoic acid under the guidance of their physician, because it can benefit blood sugar metabolism and lower their need for medication.

How much lipoic acid should you take?

For general health, slowing the aging process, and maintaining optimal antioxidant defense, 100-200 mg per day is the recommended dose. For diabetes, hepatitis, and heavy metal detoxification,