

Please Take One!



SUPPLEMENT OF THE MONTH: Carnitine

What is carnitine?

Carnitine is a compound biosynthesized from the amino acids lysine and methionine. It is needed for the transport of fatty acids into the mitochondria in order to generate and produce energy. It also acts like an antioxidant and helps protect the body against free radicals.

Where is it found?

The highest concentrations of carnitine are found in red meat and dairy products. It is also found in nuts, seeds, legumes, some fruits and vegetables, cereals, brewer's yeast, and carob.

What are the benefits?

Carnitine is effective in improving the red blood cell count and hemoglobin during hemodialysis in End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD). It is also been used to improve symptoms associated with angina, CHF (congestive heart failure), MIs (myocardial infarctions), infertility in men, and low birth weight infants. Carnitine is also used to decrease fatigue and to treat symptoms of hyperthyroidism. It is often taken to improve athletic performance and is used as a weight loss supplement; however, there is no consistent evidence to show that it works. Some studies show carnitine reduces fat mass and increases muscle mass, which may contribute to weight loss in some people.

Are there interactions with food, herbs or other supplements?

None known

Are there interactions with other medications?

Carnitine changes the effectiveness of Sintrom (acenocoumarol), thyroid hormone and warfarin. Be cautious and talk to a doctor before starting carnitine while on one of these medications.