

Please Take One!



SUPPLEMENT OF THE MONTH: Alpha Lipoic Acid (ALA)

What is alpha lipoic acid and where is it found?

Alpha Lipoic Acid (ALA) is an antioxidant that helps prevent cell damage and restores levels of vitamin C, vitamin E, and glutathione in the body. Alpha lipoic acid is unique because it works as an antioxidant in both water and fatty tissue, whereas most antioxidants function only in water. This enables ALA to enter all parts of the nerve cell and protect it from damage. ALA is found naturally inside every cell in the body and is used to produce the energy for our body's normal functions by converting glucose (blood sugar) into energy. In addition to being made by the body, ALA can be found in very small amounts in food sources such as spinach, broccoli, peas, potatoes, Brewer's yeast, brussels sprouts, rice bran, and organ meats. ALA is also available as a supplement.

What are the benefits?

Alpha Lipoic Acid has been shown to increase insulin sensitivity and can be effective in treating diabetes and symptoms of diabetic neuropathy, such as burning, pain, and numbness. It is also used for memory loss, cancer, liver disease, heart disease, Lyme disease, chronic fatigue syndrome, weight loss and wound healing.

Are there interactions with food or medications?

ALA should not be taken with alcohol or thyroid medications. People on chemotherapy and those with diabetes who are taking anti-diabetic medications should be cautious and should speak to a doctor before taking ALA.

Are there side effects?

Some possible side effects are headaches, skin rash, muscle cramps, and "pins and needles" sensation.