

## Vitamin Shopping Spree

What if you were handed a cheque and told to spend it all on vitamins—a supplement shopping spree of sorts? What should you buy? Read on for Dr. Dugoua's picks for best vitamins.



### By Dr. Jean-Jacques Dugoua, ND

Being a vitamin connoisseur by trade, I know there are vitamins and supplements that can help you take an extra step toward optimal health. Here are a few of my picks.

#### Coenzyme Q10

Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) is a vitamin-like compound that is found in high concentrations in the liver, heart, kidneys and pancreas. It is a powerful antioxidant that protects the body from free radicals, thereby slowing the aging process. It is also necessary in the production of ATP, the fuel our cells use for energy. Given its high concentration in the heart, CoQ10 is a valuable supplement for heart disease such as congestive heart failure and angina. CoQ10 also lowers high blood pressure, treats diabetes and has been shown to shrink breast tumors.

#### N-Acetyl-Cysteine

N-acetyl-cysteine (NAC) is an amino acid derivative that helps the body synthesize glutathione, an antioxidant and one of the main detoxifying agents in the liver. NAC protects the liver from the adverse effects of exposure to several toxic chemicals and from acetaminophen (Tylenol) poisoning. It has been shown to improve symptoms and prevent recurrences in people with chronic bronchitis. NAC is also an antioxidant and has been shown to reduce the risk of colon cancer.

#### Alpha-Lipoic Acid

Alpha lipoic acid (ALA) is sometimes referred to as the "universal antioxidant," because it can protect against free-radical damage in both fat and water environments in the body. ALA could also be called the "universal recycler" because it is capable of regenerating several other antioxidants back to their active states, such as vitamin C, vitamin E, glutathione and coenzyme Q10. In addition to its antioxidant properties, ALA is very useful in the treatment of diabetes.

#### Phosphatidylserine

Phosphatidylserine (PS) is a fat-soluble compound that is found in high concentrations in the brain. Studies have shown that it improves mental function. In the elderly, PS was found to improve attention, arousal, verbal fluency and memory. It was also found to improve some of the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

#### Proanthocyanidins

Proanthocyanidins are bioflavonoid compounds (plant pigments) found in grape seeds, pine bark and blueberries, among others. They are antioxidants that play a role in supporting collagen and elastin, two critical proteins that support organs, joints, blood vessels, skin and muscle. Proanthocyanidins have been shown to strengthen blood vessels and to improve certain aspects of vision.