

## Alpha Lipoic Acid- the Down and Dirty Nutrient

I often get asked, "Isn't there a pill I can take to lose weight or get my blood sugar better regulated?" "I hate to exercise," is then the next predictable statement.

One nutrient that always seems to get attention to help with lowering body mass index (BMI) is alpha-lipoic acid. In one study published in *The Journal of Nutrition*, overweight and obese women were put on calorie restricted diet and randomized to receive omega-3 fatty acid, lipoic acid, a combination of the two, or a control. The group that received alpha lipoic acid alone or in combination had significant greater loss of body weight than the control group.

One interesting finding is that omega-3 and alpha lipoic acid also prevent the drop in leptin as people lose fat. Leptin is a hormone that controls appetite. If leptin drops, the brain senses starvation and thus increases the appetite. Stabilizing leptin keeps that wild swing in appetite under control. In other words, combining caloric restriction with alpha lipoic acid and other nutrients can lead to greater weight loss than diet changes alone.

Metabolic syndrome is everywhere now and is a major risk factor for heart disease, diabetes, and other conditions. A review of twenty four human trials found that alpha lipoic acid positively affected both blood sugar and control of blood fat (LDL cholesterol) abnormalities. If you want to control or impact fasting glucose and insulin levels, triglycerides and atherosclerosis try adding alpha lipoic acid.

When I do blood testing for patients in my office one of the most important makers for overall health is how inflamed they are on the inside. That blood test marker is hs-CRP and when it's up I know blood sugar management and blood fats are out of control. I saw reference to a study in *Nutrition & Metabolism* that demonstrated adding alpha-lipoic acid not only impacts C-reactive protein but also has an impact on interleukin-6 and tissue necrosis factor. Controlling those three bad boys definitely helps controlling inflammation.

During the months of February and March we are offering comprehensive blood testing and consultations. Give us a call at 618-783-2424 for appointment.