

# Frequently Asked Questions On Arginine

## **What is L-arginine?**

**L-arginine** or **arginine** is among the 22 amino acids (nitrogen-containing molecules that form protein), which are the building blocks of the body. As well as being vital for growth and the repair of the body tissue, they are used to make hormones, enzymes, antibodies, and neurotransmitters, and help transport substances around the body. **Arginine** is classified as being a non-essential amino acid. This means your body should produce enough of its own **arginine**; however, it simply does not produce enough; thus we need to get more **arginine** from our diet. **Arginine** is found in meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy and nuts. Very little is found in fruits and vegetables, which may be detrimental to a vegetarian diet.

## **Why do I need to take an arginine supplement if I am getting it in my diet?**

You simply are not getting enough in your diet. The average American diet will contain about 3.3 to 5.4 grams of **arginine** while the vegetarian diet will contain almost one full gram less. Individuals over the age of 50, who are on a strict 'heart healthy' diet, take in about 2.6 grams of daily arginine. **Arginine** derived nitric oxide (ADNO) is decreased by poor diets, lack of exercise, age, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes and smoking. Because high concentrations of arginine can overcome the negative risk factors associated with heart disease and the average American is not getting enough in their diet, arginine supplementation simply makes sense.

## **Can I take too much arginine?**

**Arginine** has long been considered by nutritionists to be the least toxic of all the amino acids and its consumption, even in relatively huge quantities, seems to have very few adverse side effects. Clinical trials at hospitals in the U.S. and abroad have repeatedly administered 30 to 50 grams of arginine safely to patients without reported problems. Numerous body builders have long taken large doses of arginine with no reported ill effects.

## **What is the recommended daily dosage of an arginine supplement?**

The benefits of **arginine** supplementation are clearly dose-dependent and can range from between 5 to 30 grams taken orally every day.

Five grams of **arginine** taken daily appears to be the recommended dosage for the benefit of increasing nitric oxide levels in the blood and preventing heart disease and stroke. However, if you already have a risk factor like diabetes, high

blood pressure, high cholesterol or scored a D or below on your DPA analysis, then I would recommend at least 10 grams per day until they are all brought under control. You should then take 5 grams in the morning and 5 grams right before bedtime. You should avoid eating protein (by two hours on either side) at the same time you take the supplement because the other amino acids found in the source of protein will block the absorption of the arginine. It is for this same reason you should avoid buying an **arginine** supplement, which might contain any of the other amino acids like lysine, carnitine, taurine, ornithine, or glutamine. **Arginine** is the most sensitive of the amino acids and the others will block out its absorption.

Stimulation of the growth hormone will require higher dosages of arginine to be taken at bedtime on a totally empty stomach. Male body builders can take 9 to 21 grams depending on body weight, while women body builders can take 6 to 18 grams.

**I can buy arginine supplements at the local health food in pill form and pay less. Why should I switch to a liquid formula when it costs more?**

This is a valid question; however, remember this fact of life...You get what you pay for! Anytime you take a pill, it is 10-20% absorbed; a capsule fairs a little better, it is 20-30% absorbed. This is according to the Physicians Desk Reference 2002.

The reason a liquid formula of **arginine** is better, is because once it is mixed with a couple ounces of water, or taken straight, it is up to 98% absorbed. In fact, a liquid will bypass the digestive process and go directly into the blood stream into the cells within a matter of minutes. It does not have to worry about waiting until it arrives in your stomach where HCL (hydrochloric acid) must break it down and hope that it fully does before it enters your small intestine. I have seen x-rays that show pills fully intact in a person's colon and you can actually read the name stamped on the pill. According to the *National Advisory Board*, 100 mg consumed in a tablet form translates into a minute stabilized 8.3mg concentration in the blood.

A recent exit poll at a health food store revealed that people in general do not like swallowing pills and would prefer taking a liquid. Imagine trying to swallow twelve 500 mg **arginine** pills (often referred to a horse pills) in an effort to get what you believe is 6 grams of **arginine**. When actually you are only getting about 600 mg to 1000 mg of **arginine** at best and if you do the math that relates to actually taking about 60 **arginine** pills each day. Now the cost of your **arginine** supplementation just went up by five times. I prefer to drink a shot glass of liquid **arginine** because it is easy to swallow, it is highly absorbable, it tastes great, it's actually very affordable at \$40 per month and most importantly I am not flushing 90% of the **arginine** down the toilet.

## **What about the powder formulas of arginine on the market? Are they as effective as taking a liquid?**

My answer to you on this question might really surprise you. I actually took an **arginine** formula in powder form for two years. I represented a company that was selling the John Cooke, M.D., Ph.D. formula (author of *The Cardiovascular Cure*) and I actually formulated two different **arginine** products for two separate MLM companies. The problem I discovered was the powder never dissolved all the way when you mixed the formula with water and chugged it down. Then as I rinsed out the glass and saw the remaining sediments being washed down the drain, I often wondered how much **arginine** was I actually getting into my body and how much was the sewage system actually getting. Now don't get me wrong, if you would wait 20 to 30 minutes to allow it to all dissolve, then you had a formula as effective as a liquid formula. The problem is most people do not have that 20 to 30 minutes to wait each and everyday. The other issue is the cost of the powders ranged from \$80 to \$120 per month. No, I am very happy taking the only liquid formula on the market today and really appreciate keeping the extra \$40 to \$80 (actually twice that amount if your spouse is also taking **arginine**) to use for the simple things in life...like paying bills!

## **Is it safe to take arginine with my medications?**

First off, anyone who is taking any medications prescribed by your doctor should continue taking those medications and certainly consult with your physician before changing your daily routine of medication. Going cold turkey with your prescription drugs could send your body into a tailspin. In the clinical trials performed over the last twenty years with the use of **arginine**, there have been no contraindications with any of the medications associated with cardiovascular disease like cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes and other heart medications. With that said, I must warn the person who is taking Viagra (or generic) or a nitrate drug (nitroglycerin). Like arginine they both increase nitric oxide in your blood, and if taken at the same time may cause complications like too low of blood pressure.

If you are monitoring your own sugar level, as in the case of diabetes, or blood pressure, keep a watchful eye as your levels begin to drop from taking **arginine**. When they remain at a lowered level, ask your doctor to adjust your medication dosage. My friend, if you are consistent with your daily dose of **arginine**, I am telling you there is great potential that one day your doctor will have you off all those toxic chemicals, which do nothing but cover-up the underlying problem—the lack of nitric oxide in your blood vessels.

As far as the cholesterol lowering statin drugs like Lipitor, Zocor, Crestor, Mevacor or Pravachol, if you read my book (*Let's STOP the #1 Killer in America TODAY*), you would quickly discover I am not a big fan of these drugs. And it is my professional **opinion** that the moment you start to take **arginine** on a daily

basis and commit to doing this for the rest of **your now much extended life**, you can throw away these toxic poisons forever. You must read my book to fully appreciate why I am so animate about this, but I will say that it is not the cholesterol number that is the issue. It is the oxidizing of the LDL cholesterol, which then becomes sticky and attaches to the vessel wall. **Arginine** prevents the oxidizing of the LDL cholesterol, thus no plaque build up and several studies actually attest to the plaque melting away.

### **How soon can I expect results?**

Oral **arginine** does not work as quickly as injections of **arginine**, but it does appear to work as well. Increasing your oral intake by only 50 to 100 percent of what you're already receiving from your food can begin to impact your health positively in a few short weeks. Many people have reported immediate changes in their energy levels. It is recommended that you keep a health journal so you can keep track of your changes as they happen.

### **Can pregnant women take arginine?**

At this time, **arginine** is not recommended for pregnant women. There are studies that show that arginine derived nitric oxide may benefit a unique form of hypertension called preeclampsia and may prevent premature labor and preterm birth, but further studies are still necessary.

### **Is there anyone who should not take arginine supplements?**

There are a few health conditions that may **theoretically** be exacerbated by **arginine** supplementation; however, the risk is extremely low at the dosage of six grams of daily arginine. If a person was taking 30 grams of arginine or more, they should be aware that it may have an impact on the following conditions: migraines, depression, MS, AIDS, breast cancer, prostate cancer, cirrhosis, hyperkalemia, septic shock, and stroke. With that said, I wish to point out, that all of these conditions can also benefit from an increase in arginine derived nitric oxide.

### **Is it true that arginine can cause an outbreak of the herpes virus?**

The herpes virus typically lays dormant in humans until activated by stress, colds, lack of sleep or nutritional factors. Taking an **arginine** supplement can stimulate the replication of the herpes-simplex viruses if the **arginine** supplement does not have the appropriate co-factors and is taken in large doses. Look for a quality **arginine** formula that has the necessary co-factors like citilline and anti-oxidants. Beware of **arginine** supplements that contain lysine. Lysine is an amino acid, which helps to combat the herpes virus, but the two amino acids taken together, compete with each other to cross the blood brain barrier, thus canceling each other out. If you are subject to frequent outbreaks of the herpes

virus, but still wish to benefit from the use of **arginine**, you might try doing a lysine supplement with vitamin C in the morning and a low dose (5 grams) of **arginine** right before bed or vice-versa.

### **Can I give arginine to my children?**

A recent study showed that 60% of five to ten year old children already have at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease; such as, high cholesterol levels, high blood pressure or diabetes. In today's fast food society, a single French fry we feed our children is more carcinogenic than giving them a cigarette. Both deplete the body of nitric oxide, which will lead to cardiovascular disease.

There is a concern that **arginine** used by a child may cause their body to decrease the output of the growth hormone and thus stunt their growth process. However, it is my opinion that giving a child a small dose of arginine (1 to 2 grams depending on body weight) soon after eating, can counteract the harmful effects of trans fatty acids found in their diet and not have any influence on the growth hormone, which requires an empty stomach and large doses.

However, if your child is eating quality meals, getting plenty of exercise and is taking a one-a-day multi-vitamin/mineral, then there is no reason for them to take an **arginine** supplement.

**If you have other questions or personal testimonials, please email me at [drharry@wideopenwest.com](mailto:drharry@wideopenwest.com)**