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HEALTH

10 Benefits of Alpha-Lipoic Acid

This antioxidant has some fascinating health properties

Gina Kelly UPDATED OCT 13, 2021

FACT CHECKED

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Alpha-lipoic acid (ALA) is a natural compound with amazing therapeutic benefits. Our bodies produce ALA, but it is also found in certain foods such as broccoli, potatoes, and spinach. If you want to learn how ALA can help relieve pain, calm inflammation, and more, you're in the right place.

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01 | RELIEVES NERVE PAIN

Nerve pain occurs when there's been nerve damage in the body. It's the result of

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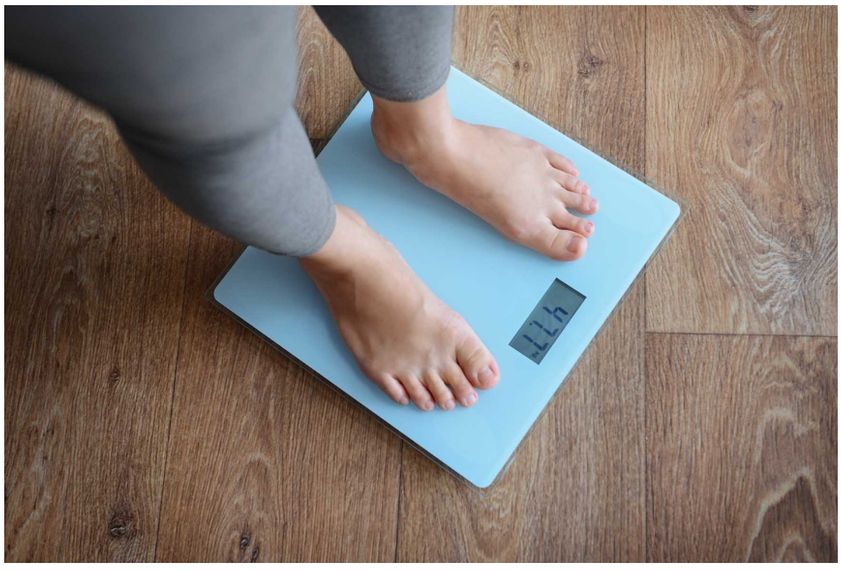
several different health conditions such as diabetes, cancer treatments, and nutritional deficiencies. Nerve pain can be debilitating, so it's important to find relief. While treating the underlying cause of nerve damage, ALA can help alleviate the pain and tingling in the legs and feet.

02 | ASSISTS IN WEIGHT MANAGEMENT



Unless you spend a lot of time reading scientific studies on weight loss supplements, it's hard to determine which ones are safe and truly effective. It can be even harder to find more natural alternatives. Studies show that when compared with a placebo, ALA had a significant reduction in short-term weight loss and body mass index. When combined with a **healthy diet** and exercise, ALA can be a natural and powerful weight loss supplement.

03 | LOWERS CHOLESTEROL

When you have high cholesterol, you can develop fatty deposits in your blood vessels. This can lead to heart disease and stroke. Sometimes high cholesterol is inherited, and other times it's the result of an unhealthy lifestyle. In addition to improving your diet and exercising, there are some steps you can take to lower your cholesterol, including taking ALA. In one study, individuals who took ALA by mouth for up to four years had lower overall **cholesterol** and lower LDL cholesterol, or bad cholesterol.

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04 | CHELATES TOXIC METALS

Heavy metals, such as mercury and lead, are toxic to the human body. Even though we need iron, it can be toxic if our body absorbs too much of it. Unfortunately, it's not always easy to avoid exposure to high levels of these metals. They're found in fish, older homes, and other items we may encounter every day. If you're concerned you've been exposed to heavy metals, you should contact your doctor, but there are natural ways to protect your body from heavy metal exposure. In two separate studies, researchers discovered that ALA chelates, or binds, to mercury and iron and helps eliminate them from the body. Interestingly, ALA didn't eliminate more metals than what the body needs.

05 | HELPS MANAGE DIABETES

People diagnosed with diabetes often struggle with nerve damage and pain caused by chronically high blood sugar. As mentioned earlier, ALA can reduce nerve pain, especially in diabetic patients, but there's more. Studies show ALA can improve insulin resistance in patients with type 2 diabetes. Additionally, when used in conjunction with other antioxidants, individuals with type 1 diabetes showed improvement in retinopathy.

06 | REDUCES INFLAMMATION

Inflammation is the result of increased white blood cells released in the body in response to an infection or physical injury. When inflammation is overactive or remains in the body after you've recovered, it becomes chronic and can be dangerous. It can cause several health disorders such as arthritis, heart disease, and cancer. There are many ways to reduce inflammation in the body, including taking ALA. It's shown to significantly suppress cytokines, which play a key role in inflammation.

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07 | BALANCES OXIDATIVE STRESS

Oxidative stress occurs in the body when there's an imbalance of free radicals and antioxidant defenses. It's similar to inflammation in that it can sometimes be good for the body, but too much of it can result in health disorders such as diabetes and neurodegenerative diseases. Oxidative stress is also linked to cardiovascular disease. Several studies suggest that ALA is an oxidative scavenger and reduces oxidative stress. Scientists believe this can be attributed to its antioxidant properties.

08 | IMPROVES AGE SPOTS

Age spots are overactive pigments on your skin caused by sun damage. While they can occur anywhere on the body, they're mostly found on your face, shoulders, hands, and arms. Although normally administered orally or via injections, certain creams made with ALA have been found to be effective against reducing the appearance of UV-induced pigmentation, or skin damaged from UV-rays.

09 | REGENERATES OTHER ANTIOXIDANTS

Glutathione is an important antioxidant. It affects our sleep patterns, oxidative balance, the way we age, and the detoxification process. ALA can help balance the ratio of oxidized and reduced glutathione. Amazingly, ALA can even regenerate two other antioxidants, vitamins C and E.

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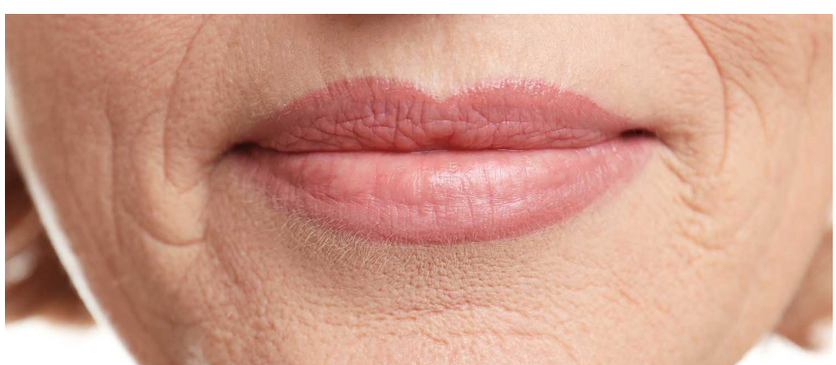
10 | REDUCES WRINKLES AND ELIMINATES FINE LINES



Wrinkles are the result of aging, sun exposure, facial expressions, and sometimes smoking. There are many products and procedures aimed at reducing or eradicating wrinkles and fine lines. Not all of them work, some are invasive, and a lot of them contain harmful chemicals. When scientists researched the effects of topical ALA, they found that it reduced facial lines and almost resolved fine lines completely.

NEXT »

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