

supplement brief

NADH This energizing supplement may enhance both physical and cognitive strength. BY JULIA TOLLIVER MARANAN



NADH appears to tone and strengthen muscles.

Health Claims

NICOTINAMIDE ADENINE dinucleotide hydride (NADH) is an energy-enhancing supplement that may improve symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) and Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

What It Is

NADH is an antioxidant that your body makes when it processes vitamin B₃. NADH supplements are derived from animal tissues or yeast.

How It Works

NADH combines with glucose to generate energy in your cells. This increased cellular energy contributes to greater alertness and mental clarity, which may counteract the debilitating fatigue and impaired short-term memory and concentration associated with CFS.

Studies suggest that NADH also indirectly boosts produc-

tion of the neurotransmitter dopamine, which is responsible for cognition and for toning and strengthening muscles. This may explain its benefits to Alzheimer's patients and those who suffer from impaired mobility with Parkinson's.

Evidence

No published studies support NADH for general energy enhancement; however, many naturopaths report anecdotal success for patients who use NADH for more energy.

In a double-blind study published in *Annals of Allergy, Asthma, & Immunology* in 1999, two groups of 13 CFS patients received either a 10 mg dose of NADH or a placebo for four weeks, followed by a four-week break. Each group then followed the opposite regimen for four weeks. Thirty-one percent of the subjects reported less fatigue with NADH during both trials.

In a trial in the *Annals of Clinical and Laboratory Science* in 1996, 17 patients with Alzheimer's who received 5 mg of NADH for eight to 12 weeks improved their scores on cognitive function tests.

Several trials have indicated that NADH helps Parkinson's patients by increasing their dopamine production. One published in 1996 in the *Journal of Neural Transmission* found that NADH administered intravenously to 15 Parkinson's patients over seven days boosted levels of levodopa (which converts to dopamine in the brain) enough to improve their symptoms significantly.

How to Take It

Experts recommend the pill form of NADH. For CFS, Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease, or general energy enhancement, start with a single dose of 2.5 mg a day, suggests J. Andrew Rife, N.D., a naturopath in Shoreline, Wash. After one week, increase your daily dose to 5 mg (in two doses between meals) and double it again the next week to 10 mg a day, still dividing the doses. Then stay at 10 mg a day, he says. For general energy enhancement, stop taking NADH when your energy levels return to normal. Use NADH long-term for other conditions.

Caveats

Although safety studies have not been done on NADH, experts believe it's safe for short- and long-term use. Rare side effects, including mild nausea, nervousness or fidgeting, insomnia, and loss of appetite, may be avoided by gradually increasing the dose. Do not take this supplement if you are pregnant. ●

Julia Tolliver Maranan is a research intern at Natural Health.

The Bottom Line

SUPPLEMENTAL NADH APPEARS TO BE BENEFICIAL FOR general energy enhancement. Encouraging results from preliminary studies warrant further research into NADH's effectiveness for CFS, Alzheimer's disease, and Parkinson's disease.