



## Muscular Dystrophy New Zealand

### Vitamins and Supplements

Although no supplements are approved specifically for treating myositis, physicians and patients have found the following over-the-counter supplements helpful:

**Coenzyme Q10** (CoQ10) is a substance very much like a vitamin. It affects the metabolism of energy and also acts as an antioxidant. It is used as a supplement because lowered CoQ10 blood levels are found in some people with muscle diseases. There is a lot of scientific interest in CoQ10. No real side effects have been reported, but it is important to talk to your doctor about CoQ10 because it may interact with other medications you are taking.

**Creatine** is sometimes used to improve athletic performance and to increase muscle bulk in athletes and older people, but cases of muscle weakness or flares of myositis have also been reported with the use of creatine. There are some other side effects, particularly with high doses. Myositis patients reported increased muscle strength in one small study.

**Fish oil** (omega-3 fatty acids) are usually made from oils of salmon, sardines, anchovies, or mackerel. They have been found to decrease inflammation and cytokine production. They are usually well-tolerated in an appropriate dose, but interact with other drugs, including common over-the-counter anti-inflammatory drugs. High doses may cause digestive discomfort.

Spices like **Ginger** (*Zingiber officinale*) and Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) and combinations of spices that contain them have anti-inflammatory, pain-relieving and antioxidant properties when taken in amounts normally used in cooking. Ginger is also used to calm upset stomachs.

**Glucosamine** helps make proteins in muscles, tendons, cartilage, ligaments, and blood vessels. It is used for arthritis, where studies have shown an improvement in symptoms. It may cause an increase in blood sugar levels in diabetics but is not otherwise generally associated with any serious side effects.

**Vitamins**, especially those that act as antioxidants, are sometimes recommended for myositis patients, particularly in cases where low activity results in loss of appetite. Vitamin C is a water-soluble vitamin used for its reported antioxidant effects in a variety of ailments. Vitamin A is best tolerated when derived from abundant natural sources in food. Vitamin E is recommended by some physicians treating IBM, and is generally well-tolerated. New studies of Vitamin D show that it may be useful as a supplement, especially in dermatomyositis patients who avoid sun exposure.

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**Calcium** may be recommended by your doctor if you are at risk for osteoporosis; and potassium may be monitored. Both are easy to find in food sources.

**Potassium** is essential for good nutrition and health and is involved in healthy nerves and muscles. Some scientists believe many people are out of balance because foods have added sodium. However, they do not recommend supplementing potassium. A moderate increase in dietary potassium, in addition to a reduction of excess sodium, may be beneficial, especially for those taking multiple medications.

Information sourced from:

<http://www.myositis.org/learn-about-myositis/treatment/vitamins-and-supplements>