



Canadian AIDS Treatment
Information Exchange

Réseau canadien
d'info-traitements sida

FactSHEET

MONOLAURIN (LAURIC ACID)

What is it?

Monolaurin is a form of the fatty acid called lauric acid. It is found in human and coconut milk. In lab experiments, monolaurin has caused damage to a range of viruses, including HIV, herpes viruses and the bacteria that cause chlamydia and gonorrhea.

What do HIV-positive people use this supplement for?

1. To prevent and fight herpes outbreaks

Results from lab experiments suggest that monolaurin damages the herpes simplex virus, the virus that causes herpes sores. In those same experiments, monolaurin also attacked cytomegalovirus — a virus belonging to the herpes family commonly known as CMV — and to a lesser extent, HIV. These observations suggest that monolaurin may be most useful at suppressing outbreaks of herpes. To this end, most people take monolaurin in the form of capsules.

2. To fight HIV

Some people obtain high levels of lauric acid by eating coconut milk or cream. Anecdotal reports from the United States suggest that taking the equivalent of three to four tablespoons of coconut oil daily significantly reduces viral load. On the other hand, anecdotal reports from Canada suggest that when taken daily for two years, coconut milk had no impact on CD4+ cell decline or the appearance of AIDS-related infections.

3. To help speed recovery from bacterial infections such as chlamydia and gonorrhea.

Monolaurin has been shown to have anti-chlamydia and anti-gonorrhea effects in laboratory experiments involving cells. However, the effect of monolaurin in humans with these bacterial infections has not been documented in published studies.

Available forms and usage

Monolaurin is supplied in 300 milligram capsules and is sold in health food stores. According to anecdotal reports, people who use monolaurin generally take between three and four capsules daily. Lauric acid can also be obtained by drinking coconut milk or by adding coconut milk or cream to liquid supplements, soups and other dishes.

Cautions and concerns

The American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recognizes monolaurin as safe enough to use as a food additive. Some people taking monolaurin have experienced drowsiness so users may prefer to take the capsules at bedtime. Finally, since we are unable to find reports of controlled studies using monolaurin, we can't be certain that monolaurin provides any clinical benefit.

Credits

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References

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Decisions about particular medical treatments should always be made in consultation with a qualified medical practitioner knowledgeable about HIV-related illness and the treatments in question.

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