

What is Policosanol?

Policosanol (or polycosanol) is the generic term for a natural extract of plant waxes. It is a mixture of a few fatty alcohols derived from the waxes of such plants as sugar cane and yams, as well as beeswax. Policosanol has been associated with improved coronary artery health. Policosanol contains several long chain fatty alcohols, including octacosanol, hexacosanol and triacontanol which are suspected support good cholesterol levels. Some studies also showed how it lowered triglyceride levels by as much as 12 percent. Policosanol is thought to improve lipid profiles by reducing hepatic cholesterol biosynthesis while enhancing bad cholesterol (LDL) clearance. Policosanol is considered a dietary supplement in the US and it inhibits cholesterol's synthesis at the earliest steps of cholesterol's production process. Policosanol has been studied extensively for the past 10 years, and several human studies have been published in medical journals in North America and throughout the world. The research has been mixed with some studies claiming a lowering of cholesterol while others have not shown much benefit from policosanol supplements. After 5 weeks on step one cholesterol-lowering diet, 129 patients were randomized to policosanol 5 mg or placebo tablets taken once daily with the evening meal for 3 years to see if it lowered cholesterol levels. While performing this clinical study, it has been shown to be safe and effective at reducing bad cholesterol without any harmful side effects. A small amount of cholesterol is needed by the body; too much cholesterol can lead to coronary disease ultimately resulting in heart attack or stroke. Cholesterol is a fat-related substance necessary for good health. If you're thinking about taking a cholesterol-lowering supplement, check with your doctor. If your doctor prescribes medication to reduce your cholesterol, take it as directed while you continue to focus on a healthy lifestyle. . Eating small frequent meals, along with cold water fish, lots of vegetables, whole grains, beans, and peas, is helpful in lowering cholesterol levels as well. Few natural products have been proved to reduce cholesterol and policosanol is one of them. Good Cholesterol (HDL) actually helps carry LDL away from the arteries to the liver, where it is processed and excreted from the body. The level of LDL in a person's blood is linked to atherosclerosis (narrowing of the blood vessels due to build up of lipids, sometimes known as "hardening of the arteries"). Having a high level of LDL cholesterol puts a person at risk of having coronary heart disease. Previous studies suggested that policosanol reduced total cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein or LDL cholesterol. In conclusion, policosanol is believed to help maintain normal cholesterol production in the liver, and to promote normal LDL-cholesterol uptake by the body's tissues. In the body, excess calories, alcohol, and sugar are converted to a type of fat called triglycerides which policosanol can also lower. Also, some research suggests that coQ10 levels in the body may be lowered by compounds that work on the same metabolic pathway as policosanol. So if you are looking to lower cholesterol naturally you might consider policosanol as well as other supplements such as, niacin, garlic, guggul, psyllium and red yeast rice.

About the Author

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