

Conjugated Linoleic Acid (CLA) Supplements May Speed Weight Loss

Major news for people facing weight loss challenges is the news that the natural dietary supplement conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) reduces body fat in people who are overweight.

A double blind, randomized, placebo-controlled study, published in the December 2000 issue of the *Journal of Nutrition* found that CLA reduces fat and preserves muscle tissue. According to the research project manager, an average reduction of six pounds of body fat was found in the group that took CLA, compared to a placebo group. The study found that approximately 3.4 grams of CLA per day is the level needed to obtain the beneficial effects of CLA on body fat.

Dr. Michael Pariza, who conducted research on CLA with the University of Wisconsin-Madison, reported in August 2000 to the American Chemical Society that "It doesn't make a big fat cell get little. What it rather does is keep a little fat cell from getting big." Pariza's research did not find weight loss in his group of 71 overweight people, but what he did find was that when the dieters stopped dieting, and gained back weight, those taking CLA "were more likely to gain muscle and not fat." In a separate study conducted at Purdue University in Indiana, CLA was found to improve insulin levels in about two-thirds of diabetic patients, and moderately reduced the blood glucose level and triglyceride levels.

CLA has been the subject of a variety of research in the past several years, and findings also suggest that some of the other benefits of CLA include the following:

Increases metabolic rate -- This would obviously be a positive benefit for thyroid patients, as hypothyroidism -- even when treated -- can reduce the metabolic rate in some people.

Decreases abdominal fat -- Adrenal imbalances and hormonal shifts that are common in thyroid patients frequently cause rapid accumulation of abdominal fat, so this benefit could be quite helpful.

Enhances muscle growth -- Muscle burns fat, which also contributes to increased metabolism, which is useful in weight loss and management.

Lowers cholesterol and triglycerides -- Since many thyroid patients have elevated cholesterol and triglyceride levels, even with treatment, this benefit can have an impact on a thyroid patient's health.

Lowers insulin resistance -- Insulin resistance is a risk for some hypothyroid patients, and lowering it can also help prevent adult-onset diabetes and make it easier to control weight.

Reduces food-induced allergic reactions -- Since food allergies can be at play when weight loss becomes difficult, this can be of help to thyroid patients.

Enhances immune system -- Since most cases of thyroid disease are autoimmune in nature, enhancing the immune system's ability to function properly is a positive benefit. If you're interested in taking CLA to help with weight loss, keep in mind that it's not a magic pill, and you will need to start a program of diet and exercise in order to successfully lose weight and keep it off.