

## Quixtar sells CLA, SKU 100280 diet aids

(continued)

a day lost the most weight over the course of two years—without even changing their diet or exercise habits.

While the research isn't conclusive, your body needs calcium anyway, for bone health, so trying it for weight loss can't hurt. Weaver advises getting 1,000 mg daily through food and supplements. Take it throughout the day, but don't take more than 500 mg at a time (smaller doses ensure that calcium is absorbed). Keep in mind that this is one situation in which too much is *not* a good thing: Ingesting more than 2,500 mg of calcium a day can lead to constipation, nausea, even serious conditions such as kidney stones.

• **Conjugated linoleic acid.** Sold in health-food stores and drug-stores as a dietary supplement, CLA appears to help you zap fat. A fatty acid derived from sunflower oil and found in dairy products and red meat, CLA both blocks fat storage and prompts cells to dump the fat they're already holding, says Michael Pariza, Ph.D., director of the Food Research Institute at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and the scientist who discovered CLA.

Research on CLA has been promising: "Studies show that over four to 12 weeks of use, you can lose up to four pounds," says Delbert Dorscheid, an assistant professor of medicine at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. "It also helps you gain muscle, to help trim inches off fatty areas—particularly the abdomen and upper arms—especially if you exercise." Since CLA makes you build muscle as well as lose fat, you won't necessarily see big changes on the scale, but your clothes will fit better. CLA may even help prevent weight gain, since increased muscle mass makes you a more efficient fat burner, says Pariza.

At the very least, CLA may simply make dieting a more pleasant experience: In a six-month study conducted by Pariza, obese people who took CLA while dieting didn't suffer as many weight-loss-related adverse effects, such as headaches and nausea. (Pariza theorizes that this is because of CLA's effects

on the immune system.) Only two brands available in the United States—Tonalin and Clarinol—have been well tested for safety and effectiveness. A month's supply costs \$30, but don't buy in bulk: Researchers say that for the time being, they only know it's safe to take CLA in doses of one gram three times a day for up to six months.

### SKIP THESE:

• **Carnitine.** Produced naturally in your liver and kidneys, this vitaminlike compound is supposed to increase fat burning when taken in high-dose supplements. Scientifically it makes sense that it would help you lose weight: "Carnitine transfers fat to the fat-burning part of the cell

University of California, I found no increase in fat excretion when they took the supplement, blocking fat absorption." An which compared chitosan prescription weight-loss drug X found that chitosan didn't bother taking it, since there's it works and it may actually you: According to some res tosan may inhibit the absorption of vitamins A, D, and K.

• **Pyruvate.** This compound, many "fat-burning supplement" health-food stores, may work in health-food stores, may work in health-food stores, may work in health-food stores. Some evidence has suggested taking 22 to 28 grams of pyruvate can mildly assist in weight loss.

Nevertheless, as Sukala, smaller doses work. The studies shown smaller amounts of pyruvate to be effective than other compounds, herbal diuretics. "I don't know if pyruvate was an ingredient that caused the weight loss," Sukala says. "Research has found that even work against your weight-loss goals." In one study, Appalachian State University researchers found that people who took pyruvate lost less weight than control group who took placebos.

• **Hydroxycitric acid.** This amino acid-like compound is sold as a weight-loss aid in health-food stores and natural-food stores.

hype than help. While a few studies have found that hydroxycitric acid, known as HCA or hydroxycitric acid, prevents a certain type of enzyme from converting excess body energy into fat, studies are far from definitive. "Some of the studies tested HCA in combination with other ingredients, but we can't tell if it was the HCA or the other ingredients that produced the weight loss," he says. In a 1998 study, American Medical Association researchers found that HCA helped people lose weight. In subjects lost the same amount of weight whether they took HCA or placebo. Since there's very little data to suggest HCA works, skip it.

## A diet aid to avoid: ephedra

Over 2.5 million customers of ephedra-containing diet aids have been warned by the FDA. Ephedra, a natural plant-based stimulant, is a popular ingredient in many diet aids and teas. The stimulant supposedly suppresses the appetite and speeds up metabolism, burning the extra pounds. However, it works as well—or as safely—as claimed. The Food and Drug Administration cautions against using ephedra since the adverse events associated with it include heart palpitations, seizures, increased blood pressure, even heart attacks, strokes, and death. Ephedra is also often combined with other stimulants, such as caffeine and kola nut, which dramatically increases the potential for serious side effects. "People have died using ephedra products," warns exercise physiologist William Sukala. "Herbal does not mean naturally safe and effective."

instead of storing it, so it can be used for energy immediately," explains exercise physiologist William Sukala of Sharp Memorial Hospital in San Diego. Nevertheless, no studies have conclusively proven that it works. Aside from being produced in your body, carnitine is also found in meat and dairy products. According to some studies, supplementing your diet with more carnitine doesn't appear to help you lose weight.

• **Chitosan.** An ingredient in many so-called weight-loss aids, this dietary fiber, derived from shellfish, is purported to act as a fat blocker. But several studies dispute this claim: "We investigated how much fat subjects excreted before and after taking a chitosan product," says nutritionist Judith S. Stern of the