



MSM

Natural Sulfur Compound with Anti-inflammatory Properties

Since 1953, dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) has been used as a commercial solvent. A by-product of the wood industry, DMSO has an unusual ability to penetrate tissues without harming them. About 11,000 articles have been written about DMSO. It has been demonstrated to have an anti-inflammatory effect—reducing pain and tissue swelling while softening hardened tissue, relaxing muscles and helping to fight infection.

MSM (methylsulfonylmethane) is a natural derivative of DMSO. It is created when DMSO is oxidized. MSM has been shown to have therapeutic effects similar to DMSO, but with fewer negative effects. DMSO sometimes causes reddening and itching of the skin, sinus congestion, and other allergic reactions, while MSM does not. DMSO also has a strong odor, while MSM is odorless.

MSM is a naturally occurring sulfur compound found in fresh fruits and vegetables and in every cell in the body. Discovered by Dr. Stanley Jacob, MD, and his associate, Robert Herschler, a research chemist for a paper manufacturing company, MSM is believed to be the main healing element of DMSO. It provides an important chemical element, sulfur, in a form the body can utilize nutritionally. Found in every cell in our body, sulfur is essential to the repair of damaged tissues. It helps keep tissues soft and pliable. It also helps cell membranes transport water and nutrients into the cell and toxins out of the cell with greater ease.

MSM supplies sulfur to tissues. Although MSM does occur naturally in fruits, vegetables, grains, and even milk, it is chemically altered and destroyed when these foods are heated. So supplementation with MSM may be helpful when tissues are lacking in sulfur due to modern diets consisting primarily of cooked and processed foods. Here are some of the potential uses for MSM as a supplement.

Hair, Skin and Nails

Keratin, a major protein component in the outer layers of hair and fingernails, requires sulfur for manufacture. A lack of sulfur can cause dry scalp and hair. It can also cause a loss of strength and luster to hair, skin and nails. So, MSM can improve the health of hair, skin and fingernails, helping to keep the skin soft and elastic and reducing the brittleness of hair and nails.

Immune System

Like DMSO, MSM has an anti-inflammatory action. It helps reduce tissue swelling and ease the pain associated with inflammation. It has been shown to help reduce allergic reactions, possibly by helping the body flush allergens away from the tissues more rapidly.

Digestive Tract

MSM appears to help with a coating over the intestines that makes it impossible for parasites to attach themselves to the intestinal lining. Thus parasites are more easily flushed out of the body. It has also been shown to help constipation and ease some cases of acid indigestion.

Joints and Tissue Repair

MSM has been helpful in some cases of arthritis. It reduces inflammation, helps tissues become softer and more pliable and works well with glucosamine to aid in joint repair. It can also reduce scarring.

Detoxification

MSM helps with sulfur-based detoxification pathways in the liver. If fatigue, diarrhea, skin rash or headaches occur when taking MSM you may be flushing toxins from the body too rapidly. Start with a lower dose.

Other

MSM can be helpful for balancing the hypothalamus and pineal gland function. It may also be helpful for the pancreas.

Use and Dosage Information

Recommended daily dose is 4.5 grams or 2 capsules three times daily. MSM may have a blood-thinning effect, so it should not be taken with high doses of aspirin or with blood-thinning medications.

Selected References

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- Rizzo R, Grandolfo M, Godeas C, et al. Calcium, sulfur, and zinc distribution in normal and arthritic articular equine cartilage: a synchrotron radiation-induced X-ray emission (SRIXE) study. *J Exp Zool* 1995;273:82–6.

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