

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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Is Co Q-10 for you? Whether you answered yes or no, your body makes a lot of it! Whether you take it as a dietary supplement or not, it is present in lots of foods and your body makes even more of it. You can go buy a bottle of Co Q-10 pills in most grocery stores. But you'd get more in a package of ground beef, a slice of liver, a can of sardines, even a peanut butter sandwich! It's just not on the label of those foods.

What is this stuff? That's hard to say. It's in foods, but not a vitamin. We make most of what we need. It's not mineral, protein, fat or carbohydrate. Nevertheless, Coenzyme Q-10 is essential for changing food into energy. Without it we wouldn't be able to do a thing. It also works as an antioxidant, catching free oxygen before it can do any damage to our cells or genes. With such important jobs to do, it's in every cell in our bodies.

You can see why some people think they ought to be eating more of it. If it's that useful, more ought to be better. For some people, it is. It is used in Japan for treating people after a heart attack or who have congestive heart failure. Co Q-10 supplements help limit heart damage. People who take it before heart surgery recover sooner. It seems to help lower blood pressure. However, it is not approved for use here in the US because of unresolved questions about its usefulness. There is no agreement on how much is needed for how long to have an effect.

Because it is necessary to produce energy many athletes think that getting more of it will improve their performance or endurance. Some controlled studies have found

that it helps, but just as many others show no benefit at all. Another theory is that it slows the aging process. There's a little evidence for that, more that it is just a waste of money.

Statin medications are taken to lower cholesterol levels. They also reduce the amount of Co Q-10 we can make. People taking statins are probably one group that would benefit from supplements taken under their doctor's supervision.

Finally, there are some people who should not take it at all. Supplements of Co Q-10 interact with blood thinners, beta blockers and with diabetes medications. People with diabetes should discuss it with their doctor before they try taking it, so that the doctor can monitor blood sugar levels, and adjust medications if necessary. It is also not recommended for pregnant women and those who are nursing infants.

Recommended doses range from 5 mg to 600 mg a day. Most evidence suggests that you have to take it for several weeks before you'd notice any change. And part of the problem is that you only absorb a little bit of what you put in your mouth in a tablet or capsule. If you take a supplement with a food that contains fat you'll get the most, but that is still only about 40% of what was in the pill.

On the other hand, it's available and absorbable from many foods. A hamburger or a steak, some anchovies on the pizza, a piece of barbeque chicken, even a handful of peanuts, all provide measurable amounts of Co Q-10. It's not as easy maybe as popping another pill, but they all taste better and provide a lot more nutrients along with the Coenzyme Q-10.

This week's recipe is salad with beef for your Co Q-10 supply, with a southwestern flavor that takes little time to prepare. Any combination of canned beans will work. You can even crumble leftover burgers from the grill, if you have any! And

adjust the seasoning to make it as mild or spicy as you prefer. Serve with baked tortilla chips and fruit salad for dessert.

Southwestern Salad

1 pound lean ground beef	1 small onion, chopped
2 Tbsp taco seasoning	1 can red kidney beans, drained
1 medium tomato, diced	1 can garbanzo beans, drained
1 bag ready to eat lettuce salad mix	½ cup grated low fat cheddar cheese

Cook beef and onions in large skillet until beef is no longer brown. Drain off any fat. Stir taco seasoning into beef and cook 1 minute more. Add beans and tomato. Mix gently to combine without overheating. Divide lettuce and cheese onto 4 plates. Divide beef mixture on top of lettuce. Serve immediately. Serves 4.

Note: instead of taco seasoning, you can use 1 Tbsp chili powder, 2 tsp dry oregano and ½ tsp ground cumin.

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