NATURAL SUPPLEMENTS PROVEN TO LOWER CHOLESTEROL AND TRIGLYCERIDES

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Introduction

A few years ago I wrote an article that highlighted the published research showing that the natural health product known as policosanol, could lower blood cholesterol to a significant degree in patients with hypercholesterolemia. However, more recent studies have questioned the validity of this original research (all of which was done by the same Cuban-based research team), showing that policosanol failed to produce any cholesterol-lowering effects whatsoever. As such, I have changed my strategy in regards to lowering blood cholesterol by combining gugulipid, which I have always recommended, in conjunction with artichoke leaf extract. I am suggesting to you that this is a more evidence-based combination formula than gugulipid with policosanol, as I had previously suggested.

The Natural Cholesterol-Lowering Game Plan

High cholesterol and/or triglyceride problems are very common in modern society and are known to increase risk for heart attack, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases. Individuals should strive to achieve a fasting blood cholesterol level below 3.9 mmol/L(150 mg/d) and a fasting triglyceride level below 1.13 mmol/L (100 mg/dL) to maximize their protection against heart attack and stroke. Eating less high fat animal products and consuming foods high in cholesterol-lowering fiber is most beneficial in this regard (beans, peas, oats, fruits, vegetables, ground flaxseed, psyllium). In addition, there are two natural agents that have proven cholesterol and triglyceride lowering effects that can be used to complement a diet and lifestyle plan aimed at lowering these two cardiovascular risk factors. These two natural agents include Gugulipid and Artichoke Leaf. When taken at the right dosage and standardized grade these two supplements work synergistically to lower cholesterol and/or triglyceride to a significant degree, in persons with elevated blood levels

Gugulipid

Gugulipid is a natural health product that has been shown to reduce elevated blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels, in the prevention of cardiovascular disease. It has been used for many years for this purpose in India, where it is has received prescription drug status, due to its high level of efficacy, as determined in human clinical trials. Remarkably, Gugulipid is a very safe drug relative to most cholesterol-lowering drugs used in modern medicine (especially when compared to the commonly used statin drugs, which inhibit the HMG-CoA Reductase enzyme in the liver, and can lead to liver damage). Gugulipid shows a similar therapeutic effect to many cholesterol-lowering drugs without any apparent risk of liver damage.

Gum Guggul or Gugulipid is derived from the mukul myrrh tree, which is native to India. Upon injury, the tree exudes a yellowish gum resin known as gum Guggul, Gugulipid or Guggulu. The extract isolates ketonic steroid compounds known as guggulsterones that have been shown to be the active constituent that accounts for its cholesterol-and triglyceride-lowering effects.

Gugulipid was granted approval in India for marketing as a lipid-lowering drug in June 1986. Studies show that it lowers total cholesterol, LDL –cholesterol, while elevating HDL–cholesterol (the good cholesterol) levels. (Agarwal RC, 1986 and Nityanand S,1989). It appears that guggulsterones increase the uptake of LDL –cholesterol from the blood by the liver. Studies in humans demonstrate that guggulsterone can produce a cholesterol reduction of 14-27%, in 4-12 weeks, and a 22-30% drop in blood triglyceride levels, in patients with high cholesterol and/or high triglycerides. A striking feature is its lack of toxicity. Unlike other cholesterol-lowering drugs, the administration of Gugulipid has not revealed any significant side effects, liver damage or toxicity, in human or animal studies to date.

Artichoke Leaf Extract

Artichoke leaf extract is known to increase bile acid secretion by the liver, which in turn, increases LDL-cholesterol receptor production in liver cell, clearing more LDL cholesterol from the blood stream. This results in a lowering of blood cholesterol. Cholesterol is the building block of bile acids. Hence, artichoke enhances the excretion of excess cholesterol (in the form of bile) from the body via the fecal route. It is thought that cynarin, a compound in artichoke called luteolin may play a role in reducing cholesterol. There is also evidence that artichoke leaf extract inhibits cholesterol synthesis in the liver, to some degree, which also helps to lower blood cholesterol levels.

In a double-blind, placebo-controlled study of 143 people with high cholesterol, artichoke leaf extract reduced total cholesterol by 18.5% as compared to 8.6% in the placebo group; LDL cholesterol dropped by 23% vs. 6%; and LDL-to-HDL ratios declined by 20% vs. 7%. (Englisch W et al. 2000). Like Gugulipid, Arichoke leaf extract is not associated with any significant side effects or toxicity.

Dosage and Standardize Grades:
To be effective, Gugulipid must be standardized to yield 50-75 mg of gugglesterones per day (example 1,000 mg dose, standardized to 2.5% guggulsterone content, taken two to three times per day). Artichoke leaf extract requires a minimum of 400 mg (standardized to 13-18% caffeoylquinic acids), taken two to three times per day. Look for products that contain standardized grades of both Gugulipid and Artichoke Leaf, and provide the ideal dosage for cholesterol and triglyceride lowering. The synergistic effect of Gugulipid and Artichoke Leaf Extract provide a natural and safe means to help lower cholesterol. This combination can even be taken safely in conjunction with other cholesterol and triglyceride-lowering medications, if necessary.

For more information on this or other related topics, visit Dr. Meschino's website at: http://www.renaisante.com

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