



# Evening Primrose Oil

Evening Primrose Oil (EPO) is extracted from the seeds of *Oenothera biennis*, which is not actually a member of the Primrose family, but is part of the Willow herb family. The plant acquired the primrose name because its bright yellow flowers resemble primrose flowers, and its flowers open in the evening. The plant has a two-year cycle, and it is during the second year that the flowers appear, from which seeds are eventually harvested. The plant was officially introduced in 1614 into Europe, and rapidly became known as 'Kings Cure All' because of its many useful medicinal properties.

## Some Possible Benefits of Evening Primrose Oil

**Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS / PMDD)** – EPO has been shown to eradicate the swollen abdomen and breast discomfort as well as reducing the irritability and depression that often accompany the monthly hormonal fluctuations of the cycle.

**Infertility** - EPO helps the body to produce more fertile quality cervical fluid also known as "egg white cervical mucus." This is because fertile cervical fluid is thin, watery, clear and "stretchy" and easily aids the sperm to swim through the uterus and into the fallopian tube, and to the egg. This fertile cervical fluid helps the sperm to stay alive for up to five days inside the fallopian tube. If there is a lack in this type of cervical fluid, it can actually impede and/or prevent fertilization. Some women are dehydrated, and have problems in producing an adequate amount of fertile quality cervical fluid. Drinking a lot of water and taking the EPO can certainly help in the production of fertile cervical fluid. Also, this type of fluid helps the sperm to stay alive for up to five days inside the fallopian tube, thus enabling conception to happen even if you don't have intercourse again by the time ovulation occurs. The dosage taken should be 1000mg to 3000mg per day. The average dose is 2000 mg of EPO.

For the benefit of infertility EPO should only be taken from menstruation to ovulation. It is imperative that you chart your fertility symptoms and signs, so you can know when you have ovulated. Please use our **Basal Body Temperature Charts** for this purpose. This is because EPO can cause uterine contractions in pregnancy. Since essential fatty acids are necessary for production of the fertile cervical fluid, you can take flax seed oil in place of EPO after ovulation. This may be taken throughout pregnancy. Check the label to see the correct dosage.

**Eczema and other skin disorders** – Eczema and Psoriasis may be helped by EPO and Fish Oils. [See our article on skin disorders](#)

**Cholesterol and Blood Pressure** – EPO has been shown to help reduce high serum cholesterol and elevated blood pressure by gently dilating the blood

vessels, but these effects may take weeks to months to achieve. EPO may also act as a mild blood thinner, a benefit in preventing stroke and heart attacks.

**Rheumatoid Arthritis** – EPO is an essential fatty acid that contains gamma linolenic acid (GLA). It is converted to a hormone-like substance called prostaglandin E1 which has anti-inflammatory properties. Sufferers have discontinued use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs after supplementation. It may be more effective when taken in conjunction with fish oils.

**Alcoholism** – EPO may make withdrawal easier, and reduce post-drinking depression.

**Immune System** – low levels of essential fatty acids may stop the action of interferon, the body's natural virus killer.

**Other conditions** – Obesity, Benign Breast Disease, Childhood Hyperactivity and Schizophrenia have all been shown to be helped by EPO supplementation due to the essential fatty acids.

### **Suggested Dosage**

Most people start by taking 2 - 500mg caps per day. The dosage should then be adjusted to your symptoms, remembering that the effects may take 1-2 months to become apparent depending on the condition you are treating. The dosage range is from 1,000-3000 mg. per day.

### **Precautions / Contraindications**

You should avoid EPO if you are taking blood-thinning products such as aspirin and warfarin unless you inform your family physician and they are able to follow appropriate laboratory studies. EPO is not recommended for people with temporal lobe epilepsy, and it should not be taken during pregnancy due to effects on hormones leading to uterine contractions!

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