



Policosanol

Policosanol Helps Reduce High Cholesterol

Policosanol is an all-natural substance derived from the wax of sugar cane, or extracted from the wax of honey bees. It is helpful in reducing cholesterol levels in people with abnormally high cholesterol, and in so doing it improves your heart health. See our [High Cholesterol Article for more information](#). High cholesterol can lead to serious health problems, including heart disease, the number one killer in the U.S., and stroke. Policosanol is relatively new to the United States market, but appears to be a promising new agent in the fight against cardiovascular disease with **minimal if any side effects!**

While the benefits of policosanol have been proven in several well-designed clinical studies mentioned below, the exact mechanism of action is not completely understood. It inhibits cholesterol manufacturer but appears to do so prior to HMG-CoA reductase, where the commercially prescribed cholesterol lowering medications act. In addition policosanol also exerts effects on LDL-cholesterol metabolism. Specifically, it increases LDL receptor processing. It exerts this effect by increasing the binding of LDL to its receptor, improving the transport of LDL into the liver cell, and significantly enhancing the breakdown of LDL cholesterol. It also appears to promote normal cholesterol uptake by the body's tissues.

Numerous controlled studies have shown that policosanol is an effective treatment for elevated cholesterol. In one study, participants received 20 or 40 mg per day of policosanol or a placebo for six months. Total cholesterol and LDL ("bad") cholesterol decreased significantly and HDL ("good") cholesterol increased in both groups that received policosanol, while none of the cholesterol markers changed in those taking a placebo. The researchers also found that **taking 40 mg per day of policosanol was no more effective than taking 20 mg per day**, which suggests that the lower amount is sufficient in most people to reduce the levels of "bad" cholesterol. In my practice I have found that some patients do benefit from the higher dose of 20mg. twice daily when they have higher beginning cholesterol levels as we monitor their lipid profiles. **No side effects were reported in either group taking policosanol.**

In a six-month study, 10 mg per day of policosanol reduced total cholesterol by 16% and LDL cholesterol by 24%, and increased HDL cholesterol by 29%. Several other studies have compared policosanol with some of the conventional

medications used for lowering cholesterol. The results have shown policosanol, in the amount of 5 to 20 mg per day, to be as or more effective than lovastatin (Mevacor®), pravastatin (Pravachol®), and simvastatin (Zocor®), with fewer reported side effects. While some prescription drugs used to lower cholesterol may cause liver and muscle problems in rare instances, people taking policosanol have not suffered any serious side effects - an important benefit!

Policosanol may also be helpful for other conditions. A two-year study showed that 20 mg per day of policosanol significantly improved lower leg pain during walking in people with hardening of the arteries in the legs (intermittent claudication). Policosanol may also help prevent blood clots by thinning the blood; in one study it was as effective a blood thinner as 100 mg per day of aspirin. The combination of policosanol and aspirin was even more effective than either treatment alone.

Policosanol Comparison

Several different versions of policosanol are available on the market - and of course all claim to be the best! Are these products equivalent, and how do you decide and choose the best product?

Some are derived from rice bran or beeswax and others from sugar cane wax. There are numerous studies investigating the beneficial effects of policosanol, the majority of them were conducted in Cuba using the patented Cuban policosanol sourced from sugar cane wax. As a result, this highly researched form of policosanol is considered the gold standard of policosanol products. Cuban policosanol is a blend of natural concentrated fatty alcohols, the predominant one being octacosanol, which makes up roughly 60 % of the mixture. The fatty alcohol compositions of the beeswax and rice bran derived policosanol products fail to measure up to the Cuban material. In fact, most of these products have completely different fatty alcohol profiles than the Cuban version, with most of the fatty alcohols falling outside of the Cuban material specification ranges.

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Pure Encapsulations' policosanol is LESSTANOL™ brand policosanol from Garuda International, Inc. It is derived from sugar cane wax and contains a minimum of 95% policosanols, 60% of which is octacosanol. Furthermore, all of the fatty alcohols fall within the Cuban specification ranges with the exception of one. The utilization of a slightly different extraction technique leaves the heptacosanol content in the Garuda policosanol somewhat lower. Additionally, the processing and purification of the raw sugar cane wax may vary slightly from that of the Cuban product.

A recent, unpublished pilot study was conducted at the University of California, San Diego. Subjects were given 10 mg of LESSTANOL™ twice a day for sixty days. Results indicated that LESSTANOL™ helped support healthy lipid metabolism. Based on the encouraging results of this pilot study, two larger studies are underway.

**Start benefiting your cardiovascular system today with one cap twice daily
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