

Acetyl-L-carnitine

Acetyl-L-carnitine (ALC) is a natural compound involved in brain health which has benefits in depression. It has been studied in regular depression, chronic depression (dysthymia), depression in the elderly, and depression with medical illnesses (liver disease, fibromyalgia, low androgen levels, and multiple sclerosis).

In 2014, a large review of 14 ALC studies concluded that it is more effective as a placebo and equally effective as the antidepressants it has been compared to.

ALC may also have benefits in energy, sexual function in men, and memory in alcoholism.

How does it work?

ALC has numerous beneficial effects on brain health. It is neuroprotective and prevents cell death in the brain. It aids acetylcholine production (a transmitter involved in memory), and phospholipid and fatty-acid synthesis (key ingredients in brain-cell walls).

How should I take it?

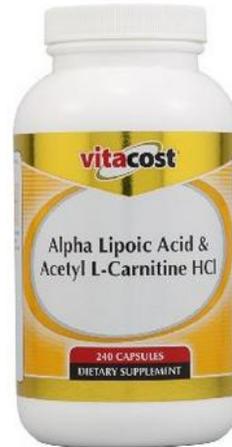
ALC was dosed at 1,000 to 3,000mg daily in the studies. It is available through amazon.com, drugstore.com and in retail stores.

The following brands have passed tests by consumer labs: Bluebonnet, Doctor's Best, Jarrow, GNC, Twinlab, Vitacost and Vitamin Shoppe.

The cost of a 1,500mg dose ranges from 30 cents (Vitacost) to \$1.24 (Bluebonnet).

What if I forget a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember it. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and continue your regular dosing schedule. Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed one.



How long do I need to take it?

This depends on your diagnosis and which other medications you are taking.

What happens if I stop it?

ALC is non-addictive and does not have withdrawal problems.

Side effects

ALC is well tolerated and not associated with significant side effects or medical risks.

—Chris Aiken, MD, updated 6/5/2015