

Creatine

Creatine is a dietary supplement that helps antidepressants work better in women.

How does it work?

Creatine is used to produce the main energy source in the brain, called ATP (or adenosine triphosphate). Levels of this energy are low during depression, and increasing it has been found to improve the brain's response to antidepressants.

Does it work in men?

The original study involved animals and found that females, but not males, responded to creatine. It is not known exactly why this is. Some studies suggest the problems in lower brain energy are more prominent in women with depression, or it may have to do with the effects of estrogen on the brain. Later, when creatine was studied in people, the researchers only looked at the effects on women, so it is currently unknown whether creatine will also help men with depression.

Does it build muscle mass?

Body builders have used creatine to help build muscle mass when exercising. It has a mild effect at best there, but will not change your muscles or physique with regular use for depression (the effect is only if using it with intensive body building).

Does it work without antidepressants?

It is not known whether creatine can work by itself to reduce depression. Creatine has only been studied in combination with an antidepressant (specifically lexapro).

Side Effects and Safety

Creatine is a safe and natural product which has been available without a prescription since the 1990's. In the available research Creatine had no more side effects than a placebo (sugar pill).

Where to get it, How to take it

Creatine (monohydrate form) can be purchased at most places where vitamins are sold, including online merchants like amazon.com and drugstore.com.

The dosage for depression is:

3 grams per day for the first week, then 5 grams daily.

It can be taken all at once, with or without food.

Consumer labs tests products for integrity – you can find a list of products the approved on the next page.

–Updated 2/24/2014 by Chris Aiken, MD

Creatine Powders and Tablets:						
<p>Betancourt Nutrition Chewies™ (1 scoop [approx. 27 tablets] per serving, 2 per day)</p> <p>Dist. by Betancourt Nutrition, Inc. Ingredients \$ Price Check</p>	<p>10.1 g of a "Creatine Blend" consisting of creatine monohydrate & L-creatine AKG</p>	<p>APPROVED⁸</p>	<p>✓ Found "Creatine Blend" to provide amount of creatine expected from same serving of creatine monohydrate.</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>\$1.52 [\$0.76 based on amount found] \$15.99/8 oz. (approx. 567 tablets) container (approx. 21 servings)</p>
<p>BodyTech® 100% Pure Creatine Monohydrate (1 rounded teaspoon [5 g] per serving, 1 per day) Δ</p> <p>Dist. by The Vitamin Shoppe® Ingredients \$ Price Check</p>	<p>5 g of creatine monohydrate</p>	<p>APPROVED</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>\$0.11 [\$0.11] Suitable for most vegetarians, contains no wheat, gluten free, yeast free \$19.99/ 32 oz. (906 g) container (approx. 181 servings)</p>
<p>EAS® Phos HP™ - Fruit Punch (2 scoops [46 g] per serving, once per day for maintenance; four times per day for 5-7 days for loading³) Δ</p> <p>Dist. by Abbot Nutrition Ingredients</p>	<p>5.25 g to 21 g of creatine monohydrate</p>	<p>APPROVED</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>\$1.43-\$5.71 [\$1.36] Taurine, phosphorus, magnesium, sodium, potassium \$19.99/ 1.41 lbs (644 g) container (approx. 14 servings)</p>
<p>MusclePharm® Creatine (1 scoop [5 g] per serving, 1 per day)</p> <p>Dist. by MusclePharm® Corp. Ingredients \$ Price Check</p>	<p>5 g of a "Creatine Blend" consisting of creatine monohydrate, CreNitrate™, creatine AAB, DiCreatine malate, Creatine MagnaPower®, Cinnulin PF®</p>	<p>APPROVED</p>	<p>✓ Found "Creatine Blend" to provide amount of creatine expected from same serving of creatine monohydrate.</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>\$0.33 [\$0.33 based on amount found] \$19.98/0.661 lbs (300 g) container (approx. 60 servings)</p>
<p>ON™ Micronized Creatine Powder (1 rounded teaspoon [5.25 g] per serving, 4 per day)</p> <p>Mfd. by Optimum Nutrition Ingredients \$ Price Check</p>	<p>20 g Creatine monohydrate</p>	<p>APPROVED</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>\$0.86 [\$0.21] \$5.99/5.3 oz (150 g) container (approx. 28 servings)</p>
<p>Vitacost® Creatine (1 scoop [5 g] per serving, once per day for maintenance; four times per day for 5 days for loading.)</p> <p>Dist. by Vitacost® Ingredients</p>	<p>5 g to 20 g Creatine monohydrate (Creapure®)</p>	<p>APPROVED</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>\$0.38 [\$0.09] Lowest cost for creatine Gluten free \$18.99/2.2 lbs (1,000 g) container (approx. 200 servings)</p>