

D-ribose... A new way forward for fatigue and fibromyalgia? By Marcus Webb

What frustrates many people who suffer from fatigue with or without the associated muscular pain known as fibromyalgia is the fact that, on paper, they are too well to be ill. Routine blood tests are typically normal in both situations but the level of pain and fatigue are far from normal and can be life destroying.

It is true to say that there is no known cause for fibromyalgia with all laboratory tests including muscle samples (biopsies) taken from the most tender regions appearing perfectly normal on specialist examination and analysis. This lack of medical evidence places sufferers in a dilemma; how to manage the problem?



Exciting work coming out of America by Dr Jacob Teitelbaum and his collaborators has looked at the effect of D-ribose in relieving the overwhelming fatigue, pain, soreness, and stiffness suffered by patients with chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia.

Their study included 41 patients with a diagnosis of fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome who were given D-ribose at a dose of 5-grams three times per day for an average of three weeks. They found the ribose treatment led to significant improvement in energy levels, sleep patterns, mental clarity, pain intensity, and well-being. Of the patients participating in the study, 65.7 % experienced significant improvement while on D-ribose, with an average increase in energy of 44.7% and overall well being of 30%, remarkable results from a single nutrient!

The mechanism behind this exciting set of results is not clear. What is known, however, is that fibromyalgia sufferers have lower levels of the energy molecule called adenosine triphosphate (ATP) and a reduced capacity to make ATP in their muscles. It is also known from previous studies that D-ribose can fuel ATP production. This may, in part, be responsible for the effects of D-ribose supplementation which appears to reduce muscle pain and enhance quality of life for those suffering with fibromyalgia and / or chronic fatigue.

D-Ribose, also known simply as ribose, is a simple sugar. Technically known as a 5-carbon monosaccharide, or pentose sugar it is used by all the cells of the body and is an essential compound in energy metabolism. Ribose also provides the structural backbone of our genetic material, DNA and RNA, certain vitamins and other important cellular compounds. If the cellular energy pool is depleted by disease, overwork, or exercise it must be replaced. Supplemental ribose can be viewed as jump-starting the energy manufacturing mechanisms and accelerating the process of energy production. To date D-ribose has been shown to be a safe supplement. Only two side effects have been noted; in very large doses, in excess of 10grams, loose stools (diarrhea) has been reported and in similar does a transient dip in blood sugar levels. However, when using any supplement that contains or influences the blood sugar levels or energy levels it is always recommended that a diabetic patient consults a health professional before hand. To reduce both of these potential but rare side effects, sensitive individuals should take D-ribose with a carbohydrate meal. Taking D-ribose at the recommended intake of between 2-5 grams per dose is not normally associated with any dose effects.

Resources:

Dr Jacob Teitelbaum's detailed review article on D-ribose see:

www.endfatigue.com/tools-support/D-ribose.html