

Using Statin Drug Look at CoQ10

From time to time, I write about nutrition in this column. Often people think that a vitamin can be used as a drug. Vitamins can be used therapeutically, but you'll get the most out of nutrition when you eat a variety of fresh, whole foods. If you don't get all the variety that you can get from eating whole foods, there are whole food supplements available. I recommend one to all my patients as insurance that they are getting what they need. The vitamin bottle definitely plays second fiddle to whole foods.

However, you should know about a single, and very important nutritional component, CoQ10 or Coenzyme Q10. CoQ10 is a naturally occurring compound in the body. It works in each cell to produce energy for that cell to work at an optimum level. We manufacture our own CoQ10, but as we age, we produce less and less of it. CoQ10 provides the source of energy to all of our muscles, including our heart. It, all by itself, has been shown to reduce hypertension. In fact, if you have low blood pressure, CoQ10 may be something that you don't want to take.

CoQ10 was touted as a periodontal treatment years ago. While I never found it to be particularly effective for most periodontal patients, I did have and continue to have some amazing stories on the use of CoQ10 in my surgical patients. About 20 years ago, I had a patient who wasn't healing well after a relatively minor periodontal surgical procedure. I told her to take CoQ10. In two days, she was nearly completely healed. Same thing happened with another patient three weeks later. CoQ10 has now become a routine part of my pre-operative instructions. And if there are times when patients might not follow this recommendation and they heal a little more slowly than they should, I reinforce the recommendation and most do better. Now this isn't science. This isn't a controlled study. It is an observation.

Many of us have been prescribed statin, or cholesterol-lowering, drugs. One problem with those statin drugs is that they drive our own CoQ10 out of our bodies by as much as 50%. Ever experienced leg cramping while in a statin drug? That may be due to that CoQ10 reduction. Many doctors recommend CoQ10 for their statin patients to help replenish the lost nutrient. In fact, one of the prominent pharmaceutical companies has a patent that combines their statin drug with CoQ10. Unfortunately, it hasn't been put on the market.

There is lots of information on CoQ10 on the internet. One good source is written by a former physician astronaut, Dr. Duane Graveline. You can see his material by logging on to www.spacedoc.net.

You should consult with your personal physician before making any medication or dietary changes. **Lee N. Sheldon, DMD**