

FROM ACNE TO ARTHRITIS

Staying Healthy with Dr. Aieta, N.D.

Dr. Aieta,

Our 13-year-old son has been dealing with acne for the past year. We have tried a lot of different topical treatments that really didn't help much. Are there any supplements that you may recommend in conjunction with dietary changes that he may benefit from?

Kim and Robert G.

One natural acne treatment involves zinc. In a double blind study, 91 patients with moderately severe acne received either zinc (45 mg twice a day) or a placebo for 12 weeks. The skin lesions improved to a significantly greater extent in the zinc group than the placebo group. In another study, zinc was found to be as effective as oral antibiotics.

I typically recommend zinc picolinate or zinc citrate and find that most patients will notice dramatic improvements with this treatment alone. Dosage is individualized based on the case. And, when zinc is used for a long period of time, I'll usually supplement with copper because zinc supplementation can cause a copper deficiency when taken long term. In difficult-to-treat cases, high doses of vitamin A can be effective. Because of the potential for toxicity, this treatment should be monitored by

a physician knowledgeable in its use.

In yet another study, selenium at a dose of two 200 mcg doses a day for six weeks was helpful in treating acne.

Often I will use a combination of all of these in conjunction with diet and herbs for positive results. For a topical application I have found topical niacinamide (which is a B vitamin) useful in treating inflamed acne lesions. I have a compounding pharmacy make this to my specifications typically in a 4 percent non-irritating cream.

Dr. Aieta,

I suffer from osteoarthritis in my hips and knees. I have been taking glucosamine for a few years now and I can say it really makes a difference. Are there any other natural treatments that you would suggest I add to help with my joint pains?

John D.

There are a few herbs that I recommend to all of my arthritis patients. I typically use them in conjunction with one another to get a more synergistic anti-inflammatory effect. These herbs are Devil's Claw, Boswellia, and Curcuma. All three act to reduce inflammation and improve joint mobility. They even work for patients with



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severe arthritis, such as rheumatoid.

Another treatment that I recently started using with my arthritis patients is actually one of the oldest and most successful treatments – the use of the B vitamin, niacinamide. The dosage is determined on an individual basis, and I typically see results within three to four weeks. Niacinamide seems to work well in conjunction with glucosamine because it improves the metabolism of the joint tissue.

Ideally you should work with a naturopathic physician to ensure proper dosing of herbs and nutrients.

Dr. Frank Aieta is a board-certified and licensed Naturopathic Physician with a private practice in West Hartford, Conn. He specializes in the treatment of disease, using natural therapies such as acupuncture, homeopathy, spinal manipulation, clinical nutrition, and herbal medicine. If there is a specific topic you would like to see addressed in an upcoming column, you can e-mail him at DrAieta@aol.com, or visit www.DrAieta.com for additional information.

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