Q Tip

CoQ10 is a potent antioxidant that may help T-cells function better

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Finding a way to detox from heavy HIV-related medications can be difficult, but coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10), a vitamin-like nutrient, may offer important aid. Clinical studies of CoQ10 in people with cancer, which show significant reduction in chemotherapy's toxicity, have led many PWAs to use CoQ10 in the hope of reducing side effects of antiretrovirals or chemo.

CoQ10, a nutrient found in every cell of the body, is key to production of cellular energy. A potent antioxidant itself, CoQ10 also reactivates spent vitamin E and prevents the destruction of beta-carotene. Numerous studies conducted among non-HIV populations have found that CoQ10 supplements help repair heart damage, heal periodontal disease and boost immunity-by restoring impaired CD4 cell functioning among other ways. In one study, PWAs had lower blood levels of CoQ10 than control subjects, leading to a pilot treatment study in PWAs, whose symptom reduction was found to be "very encouraging and even striking" after four to seven months by University of Texas researchers. But as often happens with unpatentable products, a proposed clinical trial was rejected by the National Institutes of Health.

Dosages of CoQ10 must be particularized based on the health and other treatments of each person. (It remains nontoxic even at high doses.) Nonprofit buyers clubs sell 150 30-mg CoQ10 tablets for about $20. The product can also be found at many vitamin stores and pharmacies where the same quantity may cost up to $40.

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