

ADD THESE NUTRIENTS TO YOUR DIET

FROM: **Internal Affairs:**
YOU, Your Liver and Pancreas

Get your liver and pancreas functioning at their fullest potential. Promote good digestive health and avoid digestive troubles with these nutrients and supplements.

NUTRIENTS

Lecithin

This is a supplement that contains 10 percent to 20 percent phosphatidylcholine, depending on the brand. Phosphatidylcholine is a necessary component of VLDL, or very-low-density lipoprotein, which transports fats processed by the liver around the body.

One component of the chemical, called choline, comes from the diet and can help replenish the needed levels of phosphatidylcholine in the liver to build VLDL molecules. However, when people are deficient in choline, these VLDL particles cannot form correctly, so fat builds up in the liver to cause damage. There are two ways to get choline or phosphatidylcholine—through a supplement or in food.

A varied diet should provide enough choline. Men should aim for 550 milligrams and women for 425 milligrams a day. One large egg contains about 125 milligrams of choline, and one cup of toasted wheat germ contains about 175 milligrams.

Zinc

Zinc has been shown to help detoxify the body of alcohol. The optimum amount, especially for anyone who drinks alcohol, is 15 milligrams per day.

SUPPLEMENTS

These should be taken with the guidance of a doctor or herb expert because of their lack of standard dosing and potential interaction with other drugs. Two to consider are:

Milk thistle

It's considered the safest and best supplement for liver health. Milk thistle's powerful ingredients, flavonoids, protect against inflammation and an unhealthy thickening of the liver. They also may help prime the body's immune system and antioxidant system.

Though its use is not supported by the reams of data we like to see, the evidence does suggest some positive effects, as well as confirms its safety. The dose is 80 to 200 milligrams one to three times a day.

Dandelion

A member of the sunflower family, it's one of the most nutrient-rich plants there is. The whole plant is edible, but the herb is a source of potassium, sodium, phosphorous and iron, as well as vitamin A.

The recommended supplement dose is 900 milligrams a day. Dandelion has a number of laboratory studies to suggest that it protects hepatocytes. However, good clinical data from humans are lacking.

As a reminder, always consult your doctor for medical advice and treatment before starting any program.