

Complementary and Alternative (CAM) Therapies for PD

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Coenzyme Q10: Cells need energy to survive and function.

- They contain mitochondria, which are “batteries” that produce energy.
- In Parkinson's disease, there seems to be a disturbance in the function of these batteries.
- Coenzyme Q10 seems to affect this energy-generating mechanism in cells, although the exact mechanism remains a mystery.
- A recent study suggested that treatment with 1200mg/day of coenzyme Q10 resulted in improvements in measure of motor function over the fixed of the study when compared to lower doses of the same compound or to a placebo compound.
- Coenzyme Q-10 was also found to be safe in this trial.
- A larger trail sponsored by NIH and the Parkinson Study Group is underway which will test 1200mg or 2400mg versus a placebo compound.

Green Tea Polyphenols (GTPs)

- GTPs have antioxidants and free radical scavenging activities.
- There have been some studies suggesting that these compounds have a neuroprotective effect and possibly even a treatment effect in PD.
- The Chinese Ministry of Health and The Michael J. Fox Foundation, with the assistance of Dr. Caroline Tanner of the Parkinson's Institute and Clinical Center in Sunnyvale, CA (NPF Center of Excellence) are currently studying whether GTPs can slow the progression of PD in a large, placebo-controlled study.

Caution:

- Green tea products do contain caffeine, which should be taken into consideration when using them.



Gingko Biloba

- Gingko research in the U.S. has been limited to stroke recovery and Alzheimer's disease, but Dr. James A. Duke, author of *The Green Pharmacy*, suggests that it might be helpful in PD because it improves blood circulation through the brain, possibly delivering more levodopa.
- While Dr. Duke suggests that significantly higher doses might be helpful in people with PD, doses higher than 240 mg per day may cause diarrhea.
- Gingko also has some "alerting" properties and therefore may be helpful in combating daytime sleepiness – a common side effect of levodopa/carbidopa.

Caution:

- Gingko may raise blood pressure when taken with thiazide diuretic such as hydrochlorothiazide.
- Caution should be used when taking Gingko with PD medications as some may have harmful interactions.
- In addition, it tends to have an anti-clotting effect. Therefore, if you are taking any other anti-clotting medication such as aspirin or warfarin (Coumadin), you should not take Gingko without consulting your health care provider.
- Do not confuse gingko biloba with ginseng may be overstimulation in older adults.

Excerpt from NPF website page on CAM
