

# MSM

## Organic Sulphur as a Versatile Healer

by Walter Last

MSM or Methylsulfonylmethane occurs naturally in many fresh foods but is lost during processing. Its main use in the body is for collagen synthesis, forming skin, blood vessels, hair and nails. Its main benefit is to keep cells, skin and blood vessels elastic, which is the attribute of youth. That is why organic sulphur is often regarded as the beauty mineral. It keeps cell walls permeable so that nutrients can freely flow into the cells and wastes and toxins can easily be removed.

Amino acid chains are usually linked with each other through flexible sulphur bridges. Also the oxidative energy production of cells requires reactive sulphur compounds. Without sufficient organic sulphur as in the form of MSM cells and body structures lose their elasticity and flexibility. The result are the well-known signs of aging: inelastic skin with increasing wrinkles, scar tissue, hardening arteries, varicose veins and also hardened lungs causing emphysema. Sufficient MSM is able to reverse these conditions to a significant degree, including emphysema. It is believed that the MSM in Aloe Vera is the active ingredient for repairing damaged skin.

MSM is used by athletes to increase stamina and minimise sore muscles. Its use for this purpose is even more widespread with racehorses and greyhounds. This effect may be mainly due to the ability of MSM to greatly increase the body's ability to eliminate metabolic residues, wastes and toxins from the cells. In a similar way it appears to help those with chronic fatigue. With this it also helps us to recuperate from severe physical and mental exhaustion. MSM reduces the effects of stress and the incidence of stress related deaths in animals

MSM tends to reduce or eliminate allergic reactions to foods, chemicals and inhaled allergens. It also reduces reactions to the bites of mosquitos, bees, poisonous spiders and snakes. It lessens inflammation, pain, stiffness and swellings due to arthritis or from other musculoskeletal system disorders and helps to normalise the blood chemistry in these conditions. It also reduces inflammations of the skin and mucous membranes. MSM relieves leg and back cramps and muscle spasms, be it after periods of inactivity (night cramps) or during athletic activities.

Other conditions that often benefit from MSM supplementation are hot flashes as well as discomfort due to the monthly cycle, also acne, asthma, back pain, candida, constipation, diabetes, diarrhea, diverticulitis, gastro-intestinal ulcers, hypertension, inflammations of all kinds, itching skin, migraines, nausea, pain, stress, sunburn and wound healing. It should also be helpful with other chronic degenerative or inflammatory conditions, especially Alzheimer's disease, cancer, Crohn's disease, myasthenia gravis and Parkinson's disease.

Fingernails and hair have a high sulphur content and generally improve with MSM. It also reduces parasite infections in the intestinal and urogenital tracts. MSM appears to normalise our mental condition. Individuals on MSM tend to report increased alertness, reduced mood swings and less depression. It seems to improve the immune system and the senses of taste and smell. In addition, it neutralises the toxicity of anticholinesterase, thereby providing protection against insecticide exposure or ingestion. It also aids the liver in the detoxification of chemicals and, with this, is useful to ease drug withdrawal symptoms.

The Oregon Health Service University demonstrated in many years of clinical use that MSM

1. inhibits pain impulses along nerve fibres (analgesia),
2. lessens inflammation,
3. increases blood supply,
4. reduces muscle spasm,
5. softens scar tissue.

### **How to Use MSM**

Unlike the related DMSO, MSM is a natural food ingredient and is free of unpleasant taste and odour. It is reported to be completely safe even in very high amounts. Because of its inert composition, it does not cause allergies or undesirable pharmacological effects. It can even safely be used to dilute blood. The body will use what it needs and remove any excess through the kidneys. The water-soluble MSM is easily absorbed and provides a therapeutically important source of organically bound sulphur.

The daily maintenance intake commonly ranges from 1 to 10 g in two or more divided doses. Heavy individuals may go to the upper limit while lightweight individuals may use about 5 g. However, try to adjust the dose according to your wellbeing or observed effects. You may use more or less of these commonly used amounts. Initially I suggest starting with about 1 g and increase the dosage only gradually to the full amount.

The reason for a slow increase is that MSM often causes some beneficial but uncomfortable cleansing reactions. This may result in headaches, nausea, diarrhea or weakness for a few days. If you are already on a high dose when this happens, just reduce or stop the intake until it is over. Cleansing reactions are a common and necessary part of effective natural healing methods.

If you want to overcome a specific health problem faster you may experiment temporarily with taking more than your usual maintenance dose. It is often recommended to take one dose in the morning and another one in the evening but I prefer to spread the intake more evenly during the day. You may do this by dissolving the daily amount in a glass of fruit juice or herb tea and taking a sip now and then. The exact amount used each day is not critical. You may equate a rounded teaspoonful of the fine, white crystals as being approximately 5 g.

The benefit of MSM will be enhanced by a diet high in vitamin C or with additional vitamin C supplements. You may also use MSM externally to carry other nutrients or remedies into the skin. With arthritis or connective tissue problems or generally for skin rejuvenation, you may dissolve glucosamine, copper salicylate, sodium ascorbate, magnesium chloride and MSM in a small amount of (warm) water and aloe vera gel and rub it into the affected area.

**Caution:** Individuals with plenty of sulphur in their diet (e.g. from eggs and onions) may not experience any benefits from using MSM supplements. Furthermore, individuals who are sensitive to sulphites (often used as preservative) also may react to MSM. This is usually due to a deficiency of molybdenum and can be overcome with supplementation (try 500 mcg).