



DMAE

Dimethyl-Amino-Ethanol (Bitartrate)

DMAE is a supplement that has been used to treat a number of conditions affecting the brain and central nervous system. Evidence suggests it may have benefits against the impulsive and disruptive behaviors caused by attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It may also have a role in treating memory lapses and Alzheimer's disease, as well as some troubling movement disorders.

DMAE has been known in Europe by the product name Deanol for more than three decades. DMAE has two methyl groups and is chemically similar to choline. DMAE has been popular for many years in those interested in improving mental alertness and clarity of thinking. Most people notice being more alert and focused within a couple of hours after taking DMAE. The DMAE benefit of alertness and focus can last most of the day. A few report a higher sense of wellbeing. DMAE is recommended to be taken in the early part of the day.

Because it steps up production of brain chemicals essential for short-term memory, concentration, and learning capacity, DMAE may aid in the treatment of ADHD and other disorders affecting the brain and central nervous system. DMAE is sometimes referred to as a "cholinergic" because it is thought to increase levels of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, one of the chemicals in the brain that enhances mental powers. "Cholinergic" drugs, such as tacrine (Cognex), are used to treat the dementia of Alzheimer's disease.

Specifically, DMAE may help to:

Relieve the inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Although ADHD has long been recognized as a cause of disruptive behavior and learning difficulties in school-age children, doctors are increasingly coming to recognize it as a cause of problems in adults as well. Evidence suggests that DMAE may help.

Improve memory. The possible memory-boosting effects of DMAE may help with the ordinary memory lapses that occur with normal aging. Many nutritionally oriented physicians prescribe DMAE along with another memory enhancer, the dietary supplement phosphatidylcholine. Although rigorous studies are lacking, some people who have tried DMAE report better memory (especially short-term memory), as well as improved concentration, focus, mental clarity, and sleep. In a number of studies, DMAE has been shown to reduce age-related decline in cognitive ability and memory.

The DMAE-skin connection. It has been demonstrated that DMAE causes some degree of skin tightening. However, despite speculation it remains unclear how DMAE firms the skin -- whether by stabilizing the membranes, boosting acetylcholine, reducing lipofuscin deposits or none of the above. Whatever the mechanism, the effect of DMAE is often noticeable although seldom dramatic. Besides, even though DMAE can't fully reverse the existing facial sag, it may reduce its further progression. Some people report a cumulative effect with continued use of DMAE.

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Fisman M, Mersky H, Helmes E. Double-blind trial of 2-dimethylaminoethanol in Alzheimer's disease. *Am J Psychiatry.* 1981;138:970-972.

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