

## DHEA

### People Use This For

Orally, DHEA is used for slowing or reversing aging, weight loss, metabolic syndrome, and increasing immune function. It is also used for increasing strength, energy, and muscle mass.

DHEA is also used for treating systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), osteoporosis, multiple sclerosis (MS), Addison's disease, depression, schizophrenia, chronic Fatigue syndrome (CFS), menopausal symptoms, and atrichia pubis. It is also used orally for improving cognitive function, and slowing the progression of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases.

For people with HIV disease, DHEA is used to improve depressed mood and fatigue.

DHEA is also used orally by men for erectile dysfunction, and by healthy women and women who have adrenal or androgen insufficiency to improve well-being and sexuality. It is also used for preventing heart disease, breast cancer, diabetes and metabolic syndrome.

Intravaginally, DHEA is used in postmenopausal women for vaginal atrophy and increasing bone mineral density. Intravenously, DHEA is being investigated for improving skin graft-site healing.

### Safety

**POSSIBLY SAFE** ...when used orally and appropriately, short-term. Most studies have been small and lasted from a few weeks to 6 months. Some studies have also used oral DHEA with apparent safety for 12-24 months. ...when used intravaginally and appropriately. DHEA has been safely used intravaginally by postmenopausal women in a study lasting 12 months

**POSSIBLY UNSAFE** ...when used orally, long-term in high doses. There is concern that long-term use or use of amounts that cause higher than normal physiological DHEA levels might increase the risk of prostate cancer, breast cancer, or other hormone-sensitive cancers. In some cases, 50-100 mg daily can produce slightly higher than normal physiological DHEA levels

**PREGNANCY AND LACTATION: POSSIBLY UNSAFE** ...when used orally. DHEA can cause higher than normal androgen levels (aiaairtMS^asi^asa), which might adversely affect pregnancy or a nursing infant.

### Effectiveness

#### POSSIBLY EFFECTIVE

**Adrenal insufficiency**, Taking low-dose DHEA orally, 20-50 mg per day, seems to improve feelings of well-being, skin and hair, and sexuality in women with adrenal insufficiency or androgen deficiency due to hypopituitarism.

**Aging skin**. Taking DHEA orally seems to increase epidermal thickness, sebum production, skin hydration, and decrease facial skin pigmentation in elderly men and women

**Erectile dysfunction (ED)**. Taking DHEA orally for 24 weeks seems to improve ED, orgasmic function, sexual desire, and overall sexual satisfaction in men with erectile dysfunction. DHEA seems to help men with erectile dysfunction secondary to hypertension or idiopathic erectile dysfunction, but doesn't seem to improve erectile dysfunction related to diabetes or neurological disorders.

**Osteoporosis**. Taking DHEA orally 50-100 mg per day seems to improve bone mineral density in older women and men with osteoporosis or osteopenia. It also may increase BMD in young women with anorexia nervosa. But it does not seem to increase BMD in healthy men or women aged 60 years or older who have low DHEA-S levels.

**Schizophrenia**. Taking DHEA orally seems to improve both negative and positive symptoms in patients with schizophrenia. It may be more effective in women than in men.