



ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE CHEST

BEST SUPPLEMENTS FOR WOMEN

Today's woman has access to an incredible amount of cutting-edge research on the nutrients that can help support a thriving, healthy life. Here are five stellar choices for anyone who puts good health at the top of her "to-do" list.

French Grape Seed:

The powerful components in French grape seed extract—known as anthocyanins—contain polyphenols called oligomeric proanthocyanidins (OPCs). These OPCs are an effective tool for fighting free radicals in general, but a closer look shows they are uniquely important for women's health. This is particularly true in the areas of weight management and hormone balance. Fat cells harbor hormones and are even considered by some researchers to be hormone-producing organs on their own. French grape seed extract inhibits an enzyme that converts androgen into estrogen. Inhibiting this enzyme, which is called aromatase, is vital for a variety of reasons, including providing an alternative for preventing or treating endometriosis. The inhibiting process may even play a role in preventing breast

cancer. What about menopause? A clinical study found that French grape seed extract significantly reduced menopausal symptoms. After eight weeks, women in the grape seed group reported improvements in their hot flashes and other physical symptoms including insomnia and anxiety. But the benefits don't stop there. From increasing lean muscle mass to a reduction in blood pressure to its ability to preserve capillary integrity, French grape seed extract has been shown to make a marked difference in women's health. Because some grape seed extracts on the market have poorly produced ingredients and low absorbability due to high tannin content, choose a French grape seed extract with low-molecular-weight oligomeric proanthocyanidins (OPCs) for optimal absorption—listed on labels as French Grape Seed Extract VX1.



Sea Buckthorn:

Sea Buckthorn is a berry that has been used medicinally for thousands of years. Known to benefit various conditions related to the mucous membranes, sea buckthorn can help everything from itchy dry eyes to vaginal dryness. This nutrient-rich berry provides rare omega-7 fatty acids. Plus, it boasts more vitamin C than an orange! If that weren't enough, the seeds possess beneficial omega-3s, 6s, and 9s. Today scientists know that sea buckthorn can be counted on to relieve inflamed

epithelial tissues (the tissues that cover most surfaces and organs in the body). This includes areas rich in mucous membranes like the urinary, respiratory, and digestive tracts, as well as the inner lining of the eyes and genitals. One study that tested the moisturizing ability of sea buckthorn oil in the mucous membranes of postmenopausal women found that taking a daily dose for three months significantly improved dryness. Gynecologists determined that participants also saw a three times greater improvement in the vaginal wall's integrity compared to those in the placebo group.

DIM:

An imbalance in estrogen can cause problems as a woman ages. This imbalance, often described as estrogen dominance, occurs when the level of estrogen outweighs the level of progesterone in the body. This can contribute to problems like severe PMS, breast tenderness, hot flashes, weight gain, a sluggish metabolism, and more. Enter diindolylmethane—DIM for short—a compound naturally found in cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower.

DIM helps to balance hormones and reduce the risks associated with estrogen dominance. Its antioxidant properties also help prevent cell damage from harmful free radicals. But here's the catch. To get the maximum benefit from DIM, you would have to eat almost two pounds of cruciferous vegetables daily—and who could handle that? The best way to get this powerhouse nutrient is to look for a supplement containing a clinically studied, highly absorbable form of DIM comprised of a minimum of 25 percent diindolylmethane—the amount shown to keep estrogen in its beneficial form. To fight signs of estrogen imbalance such as sudden increases in weight, PMS symptoms, and menopausal repercussions, try a combination of DIM, curcumin, and French grape seed.

Curcumin:

Numerous studies document the antioxidant and anti-inflammatory power of curcumin. But is there a link between curcumin and estrogen? Although curcumin doesn't directly impact estrogen production, it can make a difference in how the hormone acts in the body. The active or "free" form of estrogen, called estradiol, is deactivated in the liver before being excreted through a woman's urine. Curcumin can help enhance this detoxification process. As a result, it becomes easier for the body to get rid of harmful forms of estrogen and xenoestrogens—those foreign estrogens from industrial compounds that are often found in food, drugs, cosmetics, insecticides, herbicides, plastics, oils, paints, and adhesives. Unfortunately, xenoestrogens are ubiquitous in our environment, which puts an added burden on the liver. Because of its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant capabilities, curcumin also protects liver cells from damage as these foreign estrogens are processed. As a bonus, some studies show that curcumin can aid in relieving PMS symptoms. But curcumin can be difficult for the body to absorb. That's why it's important to choose a formula containing BCM-95, a proprietary form of curcumin that is blended with turmeric essential oil for enhanced absorption and even better cellular protection. Curcumin is also an excellent choice to combine with DIM and French grape seed extract.

Magnesium:

With cardiovascular disease being the leading cause of death among women in the United States, heart health is of the utmost importance. Magnesium is an essential mineral that plays a significant role in keeping the heart healthy and strong. It's so important that a study of over 9,000 participants in the Netherlands found that low magnesium levels were linked to a risk of coronary heart disease and sudden cardiac death. Without enough magnesium, arteries thicken and the tone and overall health of blood vessels decline. Magnesium is also helpful for pregnant women who experience painful cramping in their legs. A double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial found that one form of magnesium, called chelated magnesium, reduced leg cramp frequency and intensity when 300 mg were taken daily. To enhance absorption, add vitamin B6—but make sure to choose the right form. Since common forms of B6 need to be converted by the liver into pyridoxal-5-phosphate (P-5-P) before they can benefit the body, it makes sense to start with the P-5-P right away. When paired with vitamin B6, studies have shown that magnesium can also relieve PMS. Zinc is another good addition to enhance magnesium. For best results, choose zinc in the glycinate chelate form. This form provides higher absorption and helps heal muscle and tendon damage. It can also help with depression and keep the immune system strong.

