



# *NorCal Herbal Studies*

## *Negative Effects of Colloidal Silver*

**You may have seen advertisements for the health benefits of colloidal silver solutions, claiming the product can strengthen the immune system or cure diseases. But, according to the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, there is no scientific evidence of health benefits from regular use of colloidal silver and a good deal of evidence that it can be harmful.**

### *Neurological Damage*

- With extremely high doses of colloidal silver, neurological damage can occur. Symptoms of neurological damage vary and may include anxiety, impulsiveness, irritability, double vision, depression, headaches, loss of memory and seizures.

### *Organ Damage*

- Colloidal silver has been linked to organ damage. A chapter from the book "Colloidal Silver: Medical Uses, Toxicology and Manufacture" provides much detail about organ damage related to an overabundance of colloidal silver (see the Clear Springs Press website in References). The author, John W. Hill, states that tests performed on dogs showed that an overdose of silver led to silver deposits on the lymph nodes, bone marrow and kidneys. Doctors such as Alan Gaby also warn of this possibility.

### *Atherosclerosis*

- Too much colloidal silver in the diet may also cause atherosclerosis. This is a disease that affects the major blood vessels in the body; it is often referred to as hardening of the arteries. It is typified by fat streaks lining the vessel walls, as well as by deposits of cholesterol and calcium inside the vessels. Atherosclerosis can lead to heart attack, heart failure and stroke.

Colloidal silver contains a liquid base with a suspension of submicroscopic silver particles. Some people use colloidal silver products for alternative health care. Although the substance is claimed to be effective for treating a wide range of diseases, the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) site explains that no clinical research has confirmed health benefits of taking colloidal silver. Ingesting large amounts of silver or taking it for long periods of time can lead to serious negative side effects.

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## ***Minor Side Effects***

About 4 percent of 214 poll respondents at the Silver Medicine website reported minor side effects associated with colloidal silver. These included diarrhea, gas, digestion problems and difficulties with calcium absorption. Two people reported symptoms they interpreted as a Herxheimer reaction, or detoxification. This reaction occurs when bacteria are killed, causing toxins to enter the system more rapidly than the liver and kidneys can eliminate them. Effects can include fever, chills, headache and muscle pain.

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## ***Neurological Effects***

A report published in a 2004 issue of "Neurology" described the case of an elderly man who developed myoclonic status epilepticus, or a state of prolonged seizure, after taking colloidal silver daily for four months. The man had high silver levels in his blood and cerebrospinal fluid. He became comatose and died about five months later. The authors concluded that silver supplements can result in irreversible neurologic toxicity.

## ***Contraindications***

Pregnant women should not take colloidal silver because it may cause birth defects as noted by the MSKCC. People with kidney disease should not take colloidal silver because the substance has been linked to kidney damage. Colloidal silver also decreases absorption of the antibiotics quinolone and tetracycline, as well as the drugs penicillamine and thyroxine.

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## ***Permanent Skin Discoloration***

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a consumer advisory about skin discoloration linked to dietary supplements containing silver. This condition is known as argyria. It involves skin permanently turning ash-gray or blue-gray after an individual takes high doses of silver supplements for a long period of time. Argyria also causes discoloration of internal organs and tissues, as well as mucous membranes, eyes, nails and gums.

## ***Kidney and Liver Problems***

Colloidal silver products may cause damage to certain internal organs. Potentially serious side effects involving the kidneys and liver may result. Both of these organs are primary in maintaining the body's health by processing and removing impurities or toxic substances from the body. If you have a history of renal or liver disease, you should avoid this product.

## ***Drug Interactions***

According to the Mayo Clinic, another danger of using colloidal silver is that it can interfere with the absorption of prescription medications, including drugs for treating rheumatoid arthritis antibiotics and thyroid replacement hormones.

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## ***Silver***

The major effect of excessive absorption of silver is generalized impregnation (saturation) of the tissues where it forms an insoluble complex. It accumulates in the spleen, liver, bone marrow, lungs, muscles and skin. Lesions of the kidney and lungs, as well as arteriosclerosis have been attributed to industrial and medicinal silver exposure.

When colloidal silver was given to experimental animals, it produced death due to pulmonary edema (fluid accumulation and swelling in the lungs) and congestion. Hemolysis (breakdown of red blood cells) and resulting bone marrow hyperplasia (abnormal multiplication of cells or enlargement of a part due to an abnormal increase of its cells) have been reported with silver. Chronic bronchitis has been reported from the medicinal use of colloidal silver.

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## ***Eating Healthy***

Healthy eating starts with learning new ways to eat, such as adding more fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and cutting back on foods that have a lot of fat, salt, and sugar.

A change to healthier eating also includes learning about balance, variety, and moderation.

Healthy eating will help you get the right balance of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients. It will help you feel your best and have plenty of energy. By eating healthy you will have no need for medications.

Healthy eating is one of the best things you can do to prevent and control health problems, So eat your fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains and seeds for a healthier you!

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