



NEO Institute of Functional Medicine

...Your Center for Hope & Healing

LOW-DOSE NALTREXONE

WHAT IT DOES: Naltrexone inhibits endorphin receptors in the brain, which results in the body producing a rush of more endorphins. This helps quiet autoimmune function and fight inflammation.

DOSAGE: 1.5-4.5 mg

WHAT IT TREATS: LDN has been shown to decrease pain and improve mood, and halt or reverse the progress of many diseases. It has had successful results in patients suffering from fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, epilepsy, transverse myelitis, IBS, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, PTSD, autism, histamine intolerance, multiple sclerosis, AIDS and Hashimoto's disease.

SIDE EFFECTS: Very few patients have reported side effects, but they can include nausea, bloating, insomnia, hunger and spasticity.

HISTORY: Naltrexone itself was approved by the FDA in 1984 in a 50 mg dose for the purpose of helping heroin or opium addicts, by blocking the effect of such drugs. By blocking opioid receptors, naltrexone also blocks the reception of the opioid hormones that our brain and adrenal glands produce: beta-endorphin and met-enkephalin. Many body tissues have receptors for these endorphins and enkephalins, including virtually every cell of the body's immune system.

In 1985, Bernard Bihari, MD, a physician with a clinical practice in New York City, discovered the effects of a much smaller dose of naltrexone (approximately 3mg once a day) on the body's immune system. He found that this low dose, taken at bedtime, was able to enhance a patient's response to infection by HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. [Note: Subsequently, the optimal adult dosage of LDN has been found to be 4.5mg.]

In the mid-1990's, Dr. Bihari found that patients in his practice with cancer (such as lymphoma or pancreatic cancer) could benefit, in some cases dramatically, from LDN. In addition, people who had an autoimmune disease (such as lupus) often showed prompt control of disease activity while taking LDN.

In recent years, LDN has been embraced by the functional medicine community as a treatment for many disorders. You can read more about it at <http://www.lowdosenaltrexone.org/>