

10 Drugs with Great Natural Alternatives

By Gale Maleskey, MS, RD
Registered Dietitian
[About the Author](#)
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Do you ever feel like you're being held hostage by drug companies? All too often, people are made to believe that they have no options when it comes to taking a drug. If your doctor says you need a drug for a serious health problem, you might think it is the only thing you can do. You may feel frightened at the prospect of going against your doctor's recommendations and seeking out alternatives.

[Drug safety is becoming a major concern](#) among many health professionals. Reports to the FDA of serious adverse drug events, including deaths, have more than doubled in recent years. This is more than enough reason to do a little of your own research, before you get that prescription filled.

Learn about the [adverse side effects](#) associated with the drug, and seek out some secondary advice as to whether the risks outweigh the benefits. Consider what lifestyle changes you could make to improve your health, and investigate some natural alternatives which may help you [avoid taking prescription drugs](#).

Here are some drugs with clinically proven natural alternatives worth trying:

1. Statins vs. [Red Yeast Rice](#)

Statin drugs like Lipitor, Crestor and Lovastatin are called HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors, because they reduce cholesterol by inhibiting an enzyme needed for cholesterol production. Side effects include liver and muscle damage.

Red yeast rice also contains a natural form of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors, called monacolins, along with other compounds that help reduce cholesterol and improve cardiovascular health. Studies show that red yeast rice can significantly lower total and LDL cholesterol levels, and triglycerides when used consistently for 8-12 weeks.

However, not all red yeast rice products are effective. So choose a quality product standardized for its active ingredients.

What to Take: 600 mg twice a day or 1,200 mg once a day.

2. Ibuprofen vs. [Glucosamine](#)

NSAIDs like Celebrex, aspirin and ibuprofen do reduce the pain and inflammation of osteoarthritis, but they can irritate your stomach. There is concern that over time, they can make osteoarthritis worse by blocking the repair process. They have been found to actually retard the growth of cartilage.

Glucosamine, an amino sugar that is a constituent of cartilage, is comparable to ibuprofen for symptom relief, although it takes 4-8 weeks to work. What's more, it seems to stimulate cartilage-building cells called chondrocytes. People taking glucosamine for up to three years had less knee joint degeneration, less joint space narrowing, and significant

symptom improvement when compared with placebo. An analysis of several studies suggests that glucosamine might reduce the risk of osteoarthritis progression by up to 54%.

What to Take: 1,000-1,500 mg a day.

3. Ambien vs. [Melatonin](#)

Ambien can be a great help for people who need it. But like other pills in its class, it creates dependence—you end up unable to sleep without it. And it has troubling side effects, such as amnesia, daytime drowsiness, headache and dizziness.

Melatonin is the most studied natural remedy for insomnia. It is a hormone, synthesized in the brain's pineal gland, that regulates the body's sleep patterns. Melatonin production is influenced by day/night cycles. Light inhibits melatonin secretion and darkness stimulates secretion.

Melatonin is useful for older people with insomnia, blind people, jet lag and those in withdrawal from prescription sleep medication. Unlike most prescription sleep aids, melatonin has absolutely no risk for dependence. It is not habit-forming.

What to Take: 3 mg before bedtime. Higher doses may cause wakefulness.

4. Restasis vs. [Fish Oil](#)

Restasis is the immune-suppressing and inflammation-suppressing drug, cyclosporine, in an eyedrop form. It's used for chronic dry eyes, and works by suppressing the inflammation that disrupts tear secretion. Side effects include burning, redness and discharge.

Getting more [omega-3 fatty acids](#) from fish oil can help dry eyes. Tears contain oil, but if you don't have enough oil in your tears, they don't lubricate well, and they evaporate too fast. Consuming more essential omega-3s makes your tears oilier. Fish oil also reduces inflammation that can interfere with tear production. Plus, fish oil reduces your risk of developing macular degeneration, a common cause of blindness in older people.

What to Take: 1,400 mg a day, or up to 6,000 mg a day if you have an autoimmune condition such as Sjorgren's Syndrome.

5. Neurontin vs. [Alpha Lipoic Acid](#)

Neurontin (gabapentin) is an anti-seizure drug that's now become popular for all sorts of pain related to nerve damage, including diabetic neuropathy. Side effects include drowsiness, confusion, dizziness, and trouble walking.

Alpha lipoic acid is a water and fat-soluble coenzyme, naturally produced in the body, involved in energy metabolism. It also acts as a powerful antioxidant. It's used to improve insulin sensitivity and to treat peripheral neuropathy in people with diabetes. It increases blood flow to nerves, raises levels of antioxidants, and makes nerves conduct signals faster.

In one study, when people were switched from 600 mg a day of alpha lipoic acid to Neurontin, they experienced many more side effects and less pain relief. In a group left untreated, 73% developed neuropathic symptoms two weeks after stopping alpha lipoic acid treatment. The authors of this study concluded that alpha lipoic acid is “an effective, safe, and cost-effective treatment option for the majority of patients with diabetic polyneuropathy.”

What to Take: 250-500 mg a day.

6. Fosamax vs. [Calcium](#) and [Vitamin D](#)

Fosamax (alendronate) is an osteoporosis drug called a bisphosphonate. It works by inhibiting the work of osteoclasts, bone cells that break down and remove old bone. It has a long list of possible side effects, including stomach ulcers and osteonecrosis, or death of the jaw bone, resulting in tooth loss, pain and infection.

Calcium and vitamin D can help prevent your bones from reaching the point where you need Fosamax. Long-term calcium supplementation decreases primary fracture rates by 30% to 35% for vertebral bone and 25% for hip bone. It is estimated that 30 years of continuous calcium supplementation after menopause might result in a 10% improvement in bone mineral density, and a 50% overall reduction in fracture rates, compared with women who do not take calcium supplements.

Vitamin D is just as vital. Its major functions are to maintain serum calcium within a normal range, enhance intestinal absorption of calcium and stimulate stem cells to become new bone-building osteoblasts.

What to Take: 1,000 mg of calcium, and 1,000-2,000 IU of vitamin D, along with a multivitamin containing [magnesium](#), [boron](#), [copper](#), [zinc](#) and other nutrients essential for bone growth. Get [vitamin K](#) from leafy greens or a supplement. It revs up bone-building cells.

7. Prozac vs. [Fish Oil](#)

Prozac is a popular antidepressant, a SSRI (serotonin reuptake inhibitor), which means it helps to keep the “happy” neurotransmitter, serotonin, floating around in your brain longer.

Fish oil is a win-win for anyone with depression, because it can work by itself for some people, and it can safely help antidepressants work better. It gets incorporated into cell membranes, making them more fluid and responsive to the neurotransmitters that latch on to the cells' receptor sites. Population studies show that people who eat more fish have a lower risk of depression and suicide.

What to Take: At least 3,000 mg a day of fish oil. Up to 9,000 mg a day has been used in studies to treat depression. It can take several months to see an improvement in symptoms.

8. Donnatal vs. [Peppermint Oil](#)

Donnatal is prescribed for irritable bowel syndrome. It is an anti-spasmodic, so it relieves pain and cramping. Side effects include constipation, decreased sweating, dizziness, drowsiness and dry mouth.

Peppermint oil has long been used to soothe cranky tummies. It decreases gastrointestinal smooth muscle spasms, reduces abdominal pain, distention and flatulence, and decreases diarrhea in 70% to 80% of patients. People with irritable bowel syndrome also often find relief by increasing their intake of soluble fiber, and using [probiotics](#) for bloating and abdominal pain.

What to Take: 0.2-0.4 mL (180-360 mg) before meals, of peppermint oil. Also get 20-30 grams a day of fiber from diet and supplements such as [psyllium](#), and take a good probiotic that contains at least 3 billion CFU.

9. Benadryl vs. [Quercetin](#)

Benadryl is a brand name for diphenhydramine, an antihistamine used to treat hay fever and other nasal allergies. It works by blocking receptor sites for histamine, the biochemical that causes the runny nose and scratchy eyes. These receptor sites are found on the cells in your nose, eyes and lungs. The drug's main side effect is sleepiness. In fact, it is also used in over-the-counter sleep aids.

Quercetin is a compound found in many plants. It is considered a natural antihistamine, because it can inhibit release of histamine from certain immune cells. Evidence suggests that quercetin inhibits antigen-stimulated histamine release from mast cells of patients with hay fever. It's also a powerful anti-inflammatory.

What to Take: 300-600 mg three times daily, along with two helpers, [bromelain](#) and [vitamin C](#).

10. Glucophage vs. [Cinnamon](#)

Glucophage (metformin) is a diabetes drug that increases insulin sensitivity. It improves the sensitivity of insulin receptor sites on cells, making it easier for them to "pick up" insulin. This lowers blood glucose levels. Most common side effects include indigestion, headache and diarrhea.

Research suggest that cinnamon also improves insulin sensitivity, by making receptor sites on cells "pick up" insulin better. One type of cinnamon in particular, Cassia cinnamon, can lower fasting blood glucose by 18% to 30%. Researchers have also found that taking cinnamon extract can lead to significant increases in lean body mass and a reduction in overall body fat. Cinnamon also has antioxidant properties that can fight aging and help your heart.

What to Take: 250 mg, morning and evening, of a water-soluble cinnamon extract, which is more absorbable and safer than consuming large amounts of powdered cinnamon. (Cinnamon contains volatile oils, and when used frequently in high doses, whole cinnamon and fat-soluble cinnamon extracts may be toxic.)

The Anti-Aging Bottom Line: Don't let your doctor or pharmaceutical ads talk you into taking a drug you may not need, before you have a chance to try and improve your health naturally. It takes courage to turn away from the "simple" drug solutions so prevalent in our current way of thinking about medical problems.

Reference website: http://www.stopagingnow.com/news/news_flashes/5546/10-Drugs-with-Great-Natural-Alternatives