HUPERZINE A

url: https://www.opss.org/article/huperzine-dietary-supplements-brain-health  
  
  
HUPERZINE A: DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS FOR BRAIN HEALTH  
Huperzine A is a chemical compound that can be isolated from the plant Huperzia serrata (Chinese club moss), a traditional Chinese remedy used for contusions, strains, swelling, and schizophrenia. It can also be made in a laboratory. Huperzine A is commonly listed as Huperzia serrata extract, HupA, or Chinese club moss on dietary supplement product labels. It is often marketed for brain health and cognitive performance, with claims of enhanced brain power, memory, alertness, attention, concentration, and focus.  
  
No reliable scientific evidence supports the use of huperzine A to enhance cognitive performance. Multi-ingredient products containing huperzine A could be unsafe.  
  
Is it an approved dietary supplement ingredient?  
Although it is marketed in the U.S. as a dietary supplement ingredient, huperzine A is an approved drug in some other countries. For example, huperzine A is available in most hospitals in China and is used to treat Alzheimer s disease. In the U.S., however, it is unclear whether huperzine A can be legally marketed as a dietary supplement.  
  
Is huperzine A effective as a dietary supplement?  
To date, no studies have shown huperzine A to enhance cognitive performance in otherwise healthy individuals. Preliminary evidence suggests huperzine might have beneficial effects on cognitive function among Alzheimer s disease patients, but more research is needed to establish this conclusively. Some companies have been marketing supplements containing huperzine A with illegal claims that their products can treat Alzheimer s.  
  
Is huperzine A safe as a dietary supplement?  
Currently, the Alzheimer s Association recommends not taking huperzine A, especially with prescription drugs, because the combination could increase the risk of serious side effects. Taking huperzine A in combination with other dietary supplement ingredients (especially ones marketed as nootropics) might pose additional health risks.  
  
Commonly reported adverse effects include:  
  
Decreased heart rate  
Nausea  
Vomiting  
Diarrhea  
Dizziness  
Sweating  
Blurred vision  
Insomnia  
Overall, safety data is lacking and long-term use is not well understood. In addition, multi-ingredient products containing huperzine A have been shown to contain varying amounts of huperzine A inconsistent with the Supplement Facts label, as well as ingredients not allowed in dietary supplements.  
  
Can Military Service Members use huperzine A?  
Huperzine A is not prohibited for use by DoD members, and it will not cause a positive result on a routine military drug test. However, given the limited evidence of its safety, we advise caution with products that contain this ingredient.  
  
In addition, some dietary supplement products containing huperzine A include substances prohibited for use. Consuming such ingredients could put your health, career, or both at risk. In some cases, these ingredients might not be listed on a product s label, so you could consume prohibited ingredients unknowingly. Using products that have been third-party certified can help you avoid this possibility.