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# Find a Vitamin or Supplement

## N - ACETYL CYSTEINE

### Other Names:

Acetyl Cysteine, Acétyl Cystéine, Acetylcysteine, Acétylcystéine, Chlorhydrate de Cystéine, Cysteine, Cystéine, Cysteine Hydrochloride, Cystine, Hydrochlorure de Cystéine, L-Cysteine, L-Cystéine, L-Cysteine HCl, L-Cystéine HCl, NAC, N-Acetyl Cis...

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OVERVIEW	USES	SIDE EFFECTS	INTERACTIONS	DOSING
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### N-ACETYL CYSTEINE OVERVIEW INFORMATION

N-acetyl cysteine comes from the amino acid L-cysteine. Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins. N-acetyl cysteine has many uses as medicine.

N-acetyl cysteine is used to counteract [acetaminophen \(Tylenol\)](#) and [carbon monoxide poisoning](#). It is also used for [chest pain](#) (unstable angina), bile duct blockage in infants, [amyotrophic lateral sclerosis \(ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease\)](#), Alzheimer's disease, allergic reactions to the anti-seizure drug phenytoin ([Dilantin](#)), and an eye infection called keratoconjunctivitis. It is also used for reducing levels of a type of [cholesterol](#) called lipoprotein (a), homocysteine levels (a possible risk factor for [heart disease](#)) and the risk of [heart attack](#) and [stroke](#) in patients with serious [kidney](#) disease.

Some people use N-acetyl cysteine for chronic [bronchitis](#), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), hay fever, a lung condition called [fibrosing alveolitis](#), head and neck cancer, and [lung cancer](#). It is also used for treating some forms of [epilepsy](#); [ear infections](#); complications of [kidney dialysis](#); [chronic fatigue](#) syndrome (CFS); an autoimmune disorder called Sjogren's syndrome; preventing sports injury complications; [radiation](#) treatment; increasing immunity to flu and H1N1 (swine) flu; and for detoxifying heavy metals such as mercury, lead, and cadmium.

N-acetyl cysteine is also used for preventing [alcoholic liver damage](#); for protecting against environmental pollutants including carbon monoxide, chloroform, urethanes and certain herbicides; for reducing toxicity of [ifosfamide](#) and [doxorubicin](#), drugs that are used for cancer treatment; as a hangover remedy; for preventing kidney damage due to certain X-ray dyes; and for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Healthcare providers give N-acetyl cysteine intravenously (by IV) for acetaminophen overdose, acrylonitrile poisoning, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease), [kidney failure](#) in the presence of liver disease ([hepatorenal syndrome](#)), chest pain in combination with [nitroglycerin](#), heart attack in combination with nitroglycerin and streptokinase, and for helping to prevent multi-organ failure leading to death.

N-acetyl cysteine is sometimes inhaled (breathed into the lungs) or delivered through a tube in the throat to treat certain lung disorders such as [pneumonia](#), bronchitis, [emphysema](#), [cystic fibrosis](#), and others.

### How does it work?

N-acetyl cysteine treats acetaminophen (Tylenol) poisoning by binding the poisonous forms of acetaminophen that are formed in the liver. It is also an antioxidant, so it may play a role in preventing cancer.

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