

Myers Cocktail

Hundreds of physicians around the U.S. use this therapy, which is largely unknown and not much written about. The **Myers Cocktail** is named for the late John Myers, M.D., a Maryland physician who used intravenous injections of nutrients to treat his patients. Currently, the nutrient cocktail has been popularized by Alan Gaby, M.D., president of the American Holistic Medical Association and a physician who writes a lot about nutritional factors in medicine.

The idea of the Myers Cocktail is that many illnesses and conditions are associated with digestive disturbances such as bloating, maldigestion and food sensitivities and that people with such conditions may not absorb many of the nutrients needed to return them to good health. Also, many diseases cause the body to use nutrients at a faster rate, or to require higher amounts for proper healing. When nutrients are injected intravenously, the digestion is bypassed. Furthermore, the levels in the bloodstream are temporarily increased so that the nutrients are "coaxed" into the cells, and frequently into the mitochondria where they are active. This temporary boost frequently "kick-starts" the cells, so that energy is produced more efficiently in them.

Many chronic conditions respond to a series of Myers Cocktails. In my experience, they are useful in fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, and chronic depression, where patients feel an energy boost lasting days or weeks. In the case of fibromyalgia, decreased pain can be observed. In other chronic conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis and ulcerative colitis, there is electron microscope evidence that the gut "leaks" nutrients, and the injections help get necessary nutrients into the cells. Chronic asthma and other lung disease, congestive heart failure, and chronic allergic problems can respond with more energy and less symptoms. Patients who get sick constantly with infections may find an increased immune response, with less susceptibility to in acute situations such as viral illnesses.

The usual composition of the Myers Cocktail is:

- **B complex** : 1 cc
- **Vitamin C** : 1-10 cc or more, usually 222 mg/cc or 500 mg/cc
- **Magnesium** : 1-4 cc either 20% chloride or 50% sulfate
- **Dexpanthenol (B5)** : 1-2cc
- **Calcium** : 1-4cc (sometimes not given in cardiac problems or in older patients)

Frequent additions are:

- **B12** :1 cc
- **B6** : 1 cc
- **Adrenal Cortical Extract (ACE)** : 1-2 cc
- **Glyceron (an extract of licorice called glycerrhizin)** : 1-2cc
- **Glutathione (an anti-oxidant)** :1-2 cc

The latter three are not FDA approved and thus cannot be imported by physicians across state lines for the purpose of treating patients.

The injections are diluted to 20 or 30 cc, more if there is increased vitamin C which tends to be thicker. A butterfly needle is then inserted into a vein, and the injection is given very slowly, at 1-2 cc per minute. Side effects are remarkably rare and almost always are limited to local irritation of the vein.

Allergy to the preservative in the nutrients must be tested for. The most common sensations are heat and flushing (a magnesium effect), and the taste of vitamins soon after the injection is begun. The injections are usually given 1-2 times per week, and beneficial effects are usually felt by the fourth shot. Many patients with chronic conditions choose to continue the injections every 1-4 weeks or when they feel their energy slipping.

Why aren't more physicians using this therapy with wide applications and a strong record of safety? First of all, most of them haven't heard of it. There are no studies of the Myers Cocktail. There are studies supporting the need for injectable magnesium and other nutrients in asthma, heart disease, and other chronic conditions. Another reason is the bias in medicine against nutritional treatments of illnesses, borne of the fact that pharmaceutical companies support much of the research in medical therapies, and no drug company will fund a study looking at the effects of simple vitamin shots. Also, there is a tendency to look for single ingredient therapies (for instance, vitamin C for the common cold) and the cocktail works better, in the opinion of its proponents, than using the nutrients individually. Finally, old habits die hard in medicine, and the habit of reaching for a prescription pad for every illness will die harder than most. However, the need to look for safe, inexpensive therapies for chronic illnesses is becoming urgent under managed care insurance systems and it is possible that the Myers Cocktail will be re-discovered as a good example of this