



Neuropathy Hope

Hope Through Caring and Education

*A newsletter for members of the
Northern California Chapter of the Neuropathy Association (NCCNA)*

February 2009
Volume 4, Issue 2

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Great Gains

Question of
the Month

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NCCNA Sees Great Gains in 2008

NCCNA grew at an unprecedented rate in 2008. We started the year with 459 people on our membership list, and ended with 753, a tremendous 65% increase. Although a number of these people still need to renew for 2009, the growth is substantial.

What are the benefits of increased membership? One of the most important is greater visibility and clout. Those who control funding for research, public policy, and health insurance coverage are all influenced by their awareness of the various diseases involved. Even the medical community is largely uneducated about neuropathy. Therefore, when we can point to greater numbers of members, we can garner more attention and help.

Another great benefit is that we can be of more help to more people with neuropathy. Increased membership means increased funds available. This allows us to establish more support groups, print more brochures, make more contacts, and provide more services. We can increase the quality of what we do as well.

If you have not yet sent in your dues for 2009, please do so soon. We really don't want to remove people from our rolls.

For those of you who have joined or renewed, thank you. You are part of what is making the Northern California Chapter of the Neuropathy Association a key contributor of hope through caring and education in our communities.

January Question of the Month

Last month, we asked where people got socks that did not have the tourniquet tops that are so common in the stores. Many people with PN can't have a tight band around their leg due to a level of edema.

Here are some answers we received: To those looking for wider and more comfortable socks I get them from Old Pueblo Traders in Arizona. Go to oldPuebloTraders.com. Under Search type in "diabetic socks." I hope this is helpful. — LaVerne Crenshaw, Fresno PN Group

Linda Ostermiller, Sacramento, says she gets Thorlos Pades which are ultra low compression. The socks are 80% thornlon, 17% nylon, 1% spandex. (2% something else that is not identified, evidently.) She finds them at Sunrise Shoes, 5333 Sunrise Blvd., Fair Oaks (corner of Madison), (916) 967-5858. She

says to talk with Jason, if available. They have a store in Rancho Cordova as well.

In reply to your article regarding socks for PN patients: My latest catalog from FootSmart, pages 22 - 32 has several items which might satisfy your needs. It is a reliable company and I have been placing orders with them for several years. customerservice@footsmart.com. —Jeane Davidson, Sacramento

I saw a good selection of socks for foot comfort in a catalog from Support Plus. Call toll free 1-800-229-2910 or website supportplus.com —Lee Kimberlin, Grass Valley

For several years now, I have been wearing a sock called RX Comfort Socks. They have seamless toes to prevent irritation and circulation issues, teflon fiber, antimicrobial-treated fibers, and an extra-wide, non-binding top. I have tried countless socks, and these are the best I have found. The problem is they

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NCCNA
PO Box 6985
Auburn, CA 95604
530-389-2416
877-622-6298
info@pnhelp.org
www.pnhelp.org

**2009 NCCNA
Board of Directors**

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Vice President**

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**Please contact
your group
leader or check
your local
paper to find
out about the
topic/speaker
for the
upcoming
meeting.**

Affiliate News

Listed below is information about upcoming meetings and where to learn more.

Alturas

Call Judy Briener
For current information
(530)233-4733

Arcata

Forming
Martha Bolt (707)825-9454

Auburn

1st Monday, 1:30 PM
Woodside Village MH Park
12155 Luther Rd., Auburn
Charlene Amos, (530) 885-9865
Sharlene McCord (530)878-8392

Berkeley

3rd Monday, 6-8 PM
1st Month of each quarter
Lutheran Church of the Cross
1744 University Ave., Berkeley
Alan Dampsey, (510) 527-3568
adampsey@comcast.net

Concord

3rd Tuesday, 1:30 PM
First Christian Church
3039 Willow Pass Rd., Concord
Ernette Rivera, (925) 689-2464

Crescent City

Forming
Bev Anderson (877)622-6298 (toll free)

Davis

2nd Wednesday 2 PM
Institute for Restorative Health
1460 Drew Ave.
Mary Sprifke (530) 756-5102

Elk Grove

2nd Tuesday, 2 PM
Elk Grove Senior Center
8830 Sharkey Ave, EG
Michael Colozzi, (916) 421-8103

Bev Anderson, Speaker

Eureka

3rd Wednesday, 10 AM
Humboldt Senior Resource Center
(707) 268-8937

Folsom

1st Thursday, 1 p.m.
Journey Church
450 Blue Ravine Rd., K-2
Cheryl (916)985-4914
Lorraine (916) 983-4023
Beverly (916) 984-4302

Fort Bragg

Forming
Bev Anderson (877) 622-6298

Fresno

3rd Tuesday, 11:15 AM
Carrows Restaurant
1484 E. Shaw Ave.
Maria Chavez (559)437-9787

Grass Valley

2nd Monday, 1:30 PM
GV United Methodist Church
236 S. Church St., Grass Valley
Sally (530) 268-1017

Jackson

3rd Tuesday,
10 AM of odd numbered months
Amador County Senior Center
229 New York Ranch Rd. Jackson
Laurie, (209) 223-0442
Darlene, (209) 296-1760

Lincoln

3rd Wednesday, 1 PM
Raley's Event Center
765 S. Hwy 65, Lincoln
Diana Borg (916) 408-7017

Livermore

4th Tuesday, 10 AM
Heritage Estates
900 E. Stanley Blvd.
E. Lorene Stack, (925) 447-6158

Merced

2nd Thursday, 1 PM
Central Presbyterian Church
1920 Canal Street
(in The Hoffmeiser Center
across the street from the church)
Susan Baldasano (209)617-6283

Modesto

3rd Monday, 10:30 AM
Denny's Restaurant
1525 McHenry Ave.
Noreen Jones (209) 846-0954

Monterey

3rd Wednesday,
10:30 AM of odd numbered months
First Presbyterian Church
501 El Dorado St.
Don & Ann Trout, (831) 372-6959

Napa

1st Thursday, 2 PM
Napa Senior Center
1500 Jefferson St., Napa
Ron Patrick (707) 257-2343
bonjournapa@hotmail.com

Oakland

1st Thursday, 1 PM
Grand Ave. 7th Adventist Church,
278 Grand Ave.
Kathleen Nagel (510) 653-8625

Placerville

4th Wednesday, 1 PM
Placerville Senior Center
937 Spring St., Placerville
Frank Ruscoe (530) 647-0777

Redding

2nd Wednesday, 1:30 PM
Neighborhood Church of Redding,
777 Loma Vista
Bill Morehouse (530) 221-3082
Carol Reeves (530) 549-4351

Reno, NV

2nd Tuesday, 6:30 PM
Fire Station #11
7105 Mae Anne Ave., Reno
Marsha Campbell
(775) 851-0499
LadyJane2b@sbcglobal.net

Roseville

2nd Tuesday, 7 PM
Sierra Point Sr. Res.
5161 Foothills Blvd., Roseville
Mary Lou Ward, (916) 772-5598

Sacramento

3rd Tuesday, 1:30 PM
Northminster Presby. Church
3235 Pope Street, Sacramento
Anne Fletcher, (916) 391-3317
Myke Taylor, (916) 487-2903

San Francisco

Call Amy Mahoney to be sure of
the meeting day and time.
UC-San Francisco Med Ctr.
400 Parnassus Ave.
Amb. Care Ctr.
8th Fl. , Rm A888, San Francisco
Amy Mahoney, (415) 502-5064
amy.Mahoney@ucsfmedctr.org

San Jose

3rd Saturday, 10:30 AM
O'Conner Hospital,
2105 Forest Ave,
SJ DePaul Conf. Rm., San Jose
Stan Pashote, (510) 490-4456

San Mateo

3rd Thursday, 1 PM
St. Andrews Lutheran Church
1501 S. El Camino Real, San Mateo
Bev Anderson (877)622-6298 (toll Free)

San Rafael

3rd Wednesday, 1 PM
Lutheran Church of the Resurrection
1100 Las Galinas Ave., San Rafael
Barbara Webb (415) 453-9678

Santa Cruz

Call Mary Ann for date and time.
Mary Ann Leer, (831) 477-1239
maleer@comcast.net

Santa Rosa

1st Thursday, 10:30 AM
Santa Rosa Senior Center
704 Bennett Valley Rd.
Willie Quarante, (707) 544-3236

Sonoma

1st Friday, 10:30 a.m.
Vintage House
264 1st Street
Joann Bertolucci (707) 996-8336

Sonora.

4th Monday, 2 PM
Sonora Regional Medical Center
Conference Room
L.D. Wright (209) 533-2887

Stockton

3rd Tuesday, 4 p.m.
Service First of Northern California
102 W. Bianchi Rd.
Bev Mallette (209)944-7815

Susanville

1st Saturday
10:30 A.M.
Jackie Woodson (530) 257-4693

Truckee

3rd Monday, 1 PM
Truckee Pines Apartments
10100 Estates Dr.
Marsha Campbell (775) 851-0499

Turlock

Forming
Bev Anderson (877) 622-6298

Ukiah

Forming
Claudia Douglass (707) 468-8174

Walnut Creek

4th Friday, 10 AM
Rossmoor, Hillside Clubhouse,
Las Trampas Room, Walnut Creek
Nancy Ostrander, (925) 930-9524

West Sacramento

3rd Tuesday, 2 PM
West Sacramento Senior Center
664 Cummins Way
Sandra Vinson, (916) 372-6093
slvins11@charter.net

Woodland

1st Monday, 3:30 PM
Woodland Comm. & Senior Center
2001 East St., Woodland
Delia Genera (530) 661-3238

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Alpha Lipoic Acid Information

We mention Alpha Lipoic Acid fairly frequently as an antioxidant that is used regularly in Europe in the treatment of peripheral neuropathy. There are some books on this topic on our book list. Some have found it helps. As is usually the case, some don't. This article summarizes the information found in the books. The author is from Australia and the article is used by written permission of the author. Her discussion of the types of ALA is not commonly presented. Most ALC available to us at an economical cost is the S type. On page 86 of PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY – WHEN THE NUMBNESS, WEAKNESS, AND PAIN WON'T STOP by Norman Latov, MD, PhD, it states "The most common alternative medicines are those used for diabetic neuropathy. These include alpha lipoic acid, at doses of 600-800 mg a day." At that level, it would be the S form that he is referring to.

Alpha Lipoic Acid: The Multi-Tasking Supplement

by Teya Skae, Citizen Journalist

If there is one highly competent, yet underrated supplement, it would have to be Alpha Lipoic Acid (ALA). ALA is not to be confused with the alpha-linolenic acid (also called ALA) found in flax, canola oil and walnuts. Lipoic acid, or thioctic acid, is slowly being recognized for its ability to assist the body in a number of significant energy production and physiological functions. For this reason it deserves the title of a multi-tasking supplement.

Let's have a look at why. Lipoic acid is an antioxidant that is naturally produced in the body; hence, it is often called a metabolic antioxidant. First discovered in the 1930's, it was not until the 1950's that researchers began to take an interest in lipoic acid as a serious supplement. As a result of these studies, lipoic acid was labeled a "universal" antioxidant. Why? Because it helps to recycle other important antioxidants such as, vitamin C and E, in the body. Remember, antioxidants are the good guys that assist the body from oxidizing too much and too quickly, due to over production of free radicals – a very common physiological phenomena that results from stress, metabolic wastes and physical exercise. As we know, too much free radical damage causes inflammation, heart disease and premature aging. The only way to halt this process is to ensure the body has plenty of bioavailable antioxidants to counteract the free radical damage.

What is so special about Lipoic Acid? Unlike other antioxidants which are either fat soluble or water soluble, lipoic acid simultaneously acts as both a fat and a water-soluble antioxidant in the body. This allows it to be easily absorbed and transported across cell membranes. This unique quality of lipoic acid offers protection against free radicals both inside and outside the cell, whereas other antioxidants only provide protection outside the cells and not inside, where a lot of action takes place.

In addition to being a powerful antioxidant, alpha lipoic acid helps the body use glucose; hence, it is useful in lowering blood sugar levels and in the management of diabetes. Diabetes Mellitus is a degenerative condition associated with abnormally high levels of sugar in the blood. Glucose (sugar) builds up in the bloodstream as a result of the body's inability to produce insulin (which regulates blood/sugar levels) or the inability of insulin in the body to control sugar levels.

This is where lipoic acid is of benefit,

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Affiliate News...

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Yuba City

Nancy Escudero,(530) 673-3608

nancychristina1@yahoo.net

Yreka

2nd Thursday, 2 PM

Meadowlark Assisted Living Center

Terry Rees,(530) 842-1577

Gene Arnold,(530) 842-7744

Medical News

The February edition of READER'S DIGEST reports that doctors are developing a technique by which disease can be diagnosed from your breath. Basal cell carcinomas have been diagnosed this way. Do you suppose neuropathy has a distinctive odor?

Help With Health Care Challenges
If number not in your area, call this one and ask for the right number.

HICAP

Health Insurance Counseling for seniors and people with disabilities. Call Seniors First/ SeniorLink at 1-800-878-9222 to make an appointment.

Health Rights Hotline

Serving Placer, El Dorado, Yolo, & Sacramento Counties, regardless where you receive your health coverage. Tollfree (888) 354-4474 or TDD (916) 551-2180. In Sacramento, call (916) 551-2100. www.hrh.org.

HMO Help Center
Assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call (888) HMO-2219 or (877) 688-9891 (TDD).

DRA's Health Access Project

Free publications about the health care and insurance rights and concerns of people with disabilities and serious health conditions. For more information, go to <http://dralegal.org/>, and click on "Projects".

DISCOUNTS FOR NCCNA MEMBERS

Give a call or visit. If you chose to purchase the service or wares of any on this list, pull out your NCCNA Membership Card and claim the discount.

Auburn

The Footpath, 825 Lincoln Way, Auburn, CA 95603 (530)885-2091 Fax (530)885-3074 Mon.- Fri. 9-5:30, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 11-4 www.footpathshoes.com They carry SAS, Dansko, Merrell, Finn, MBT, Keen, Naot, Reiker, Ecco, Teva, Clark, Wolky, Mephisto, and Earth shoes. 10% off the regular price. Bev Anderson is a regular customer for shoes and slippers.

Fortuna

Strehl's Family Shoes & Repair, Corner of 12th & Main, 1155 Main Street, Fortuna, CA 95540 (707)725-2610 Fax (707)725-0192 Strehl's carries the brands of shoes most kind to neuropathic feet. Marilyn Strehl, C. PED is a Certified Pedorthic. Discount of 10% given. A sizable number of the Eureka PN Group buy shoes here. Marilyn attended a recent meeting and joined NCCNA. She was welcomed.

Sacramento

Dr. Tracy Basso, one of our medical advisors and a member of NCCNA, is happy to offer NCCNA members a 15% discount on purchases at Shoes-n-Feet during 2008. Shoes-n-Feet specializes in comfort shoes, many that are stylish, and carries such brands as Actrix, Aravn, Brooks, Dansko, Naut, Finn, Comfort, and New Balance among others. Most, if not all their shoes, accommodate orthotics. Store employees provide great customer service ensuring the shoes you purchase fit properly, provide good support and feel comfortable. Shoes-n-Feet is at 4740 Natomas Blvd, Suite 130, Sacramento, CA 95835 (916) 419-0040

Our Support Group Leaders

As we learn more about the wonderful people who lead our groups, it makes it easier for us to network with them. Those with neuropathy are not alone; neither are our Leaders.

Darlene Jarnigan, Leader, Jackson PN Support Group

The group meets on the 3rd Monday of each odd-numbered month at the Amador County Senior Center, 229 New York Ranch Rd., Jackson.

Darlene was born in Phoenix, AZ. She lived with a variety of relatives in various locations, but returned to Phoenix in time to graduate from high school there. Business college in Wichita, Kansas, was next. She took a job at the local NBC TV Station. She was in sales, but when they needed extra people on camera, she was one of those "thrown on." She had various small jobs in a variety of locations due to moves. She worked for the University of Nevada and then the night shift at restaurants so she could be home with her children during the day.

Today, Darlene works 2 half-days at Curves in Jackson taking the afternoon-evening shift. She works three full days at The Clothes Mine in Sutter Creek. So if you are ever on a tour along Highway 49 and stop in Sutter Creek, you might give The Clothes Mine a visit. Besides leading the Jackson Peripheral Neuropathy Support Group, Darlene volunteers as President of her homeowners association and is Treasurer of the Pine Grove Civic Improvement Association. She lives in Pine Grove.

Darlene was married and had 4 children, two girls and two boys. Her former husband now lives in Arizona making saddles. Her youngest daughter is getting her Ph.D. from UCLA and is working at Cal State-Fullerton. Her oldest spent 22 years in the Navy and was a member of JAG. Now, she has a horsefarm in Sequin, Texas. The sons were between the two daughters. One spent 21 years in the Marines and works at a metal fabricating shop in Connecticut. The other spent 8 years in the Marines and is a wholesaler in Phoenix.

Darlene was diagnosed with neuropathy in 2002, but thinks she had it several years earlier without knowing what it was. She says her PN is not as debilitating as that of some others in her group. She first noticed "blank spots" in her feet she couldn't feel when her foot was flat on the floor. She has the burning sensation and experiences the "hot needle" pricks. She has diabetes so figures her PN comes because of that. Her mother also had diabetes and many of the same symptoms but no diagnosis was made of this in her days.

The Jackson Group started several years ago when Bev Anderson visited to see if there was interest. Darlene volunteered to take the lead. Today they have several dozen people in the group. Darlene says that people keep the meeting going. She mainly is there to lead the meeting. Other people volunteer to help. She also gets calls from people who have read the announcement in the newspaper. They have few speakers as Jackson is a relatively small city and the medical community is not sizable. Having the DVD(s) that are coming soon will be of major help.

Marsha Campbell, Leader, Reno Peripheral Neuropathy Support Group

The group meets on the 2nd Tuesday, 6:30 p.m., Fire Station #11, 7105 Mae Anne Ave., Reno.

Marsha was born in Hoot Owl Holler, Arkansas, in a log house. In her early years, her parents, with Marsha going along, were missionaries in Cuba. For a while, they lived in Springfield, Missouri, but then moved to Santa Ana where she graduated from Santa Ana Senior High, only one in the city at that time. She went to work at 1st American Title Company and from there went into banking. For a while, she taught college level banking classes.

During this time, she moved to Las Vegas, Nevada. One of her first jobs there was at the Mint Hotel where she was the youngest and first female cage and credit manager in the State of Nevada. She met her husband through the bank where she worked. When they married, one had to quit. She was the one who did. He lived in Reno and they chose to live there.

Today, Marsha operates J.T.'s Attic in downtown Reno at the Virginia Street Antique Mall, 1251 S. Virginia Street. So if you are in Reno, you might like to check it out, especially if you are an antique buff. Marsha reports she and her husband have no children but have two

President's Message

by Bev Anderson

If you look at the Board of Directors list, you will notice we've had changes. If you have computer access, you can check out their bios to know more about them.

Charlotte Krale resigned from the Board due to health reasons. She is battling cancer. Charlotte's wit and insightful questions and comments will be greatly missed. She is a very special lady. Sandra Vinson, Director Emeritus, delivered a card and a bouquet of pink roses in her honor from the Board.

Suzanne Lieban joined the Board in December. Suzanne brings a wealth of non-profit experience and training. She has been active in the California State PTA having served as 18th District President and on the California State PTA Board. She recently was awarded a Master's Degree in the field of community development. Suzanne was elected Secretary at the January meeting of the Board. She doesn't have PN but has a strong interest in helping people with this disease.

Michael "Mike" Green, a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), joined the Board at its January meeting. Mike is a member of the Monterey PN Support Group. He would have joined a month or two earlier but he and his wife had scheduled a trip to China and Tibet and they were out of town. Having the financial background and the knowledge of how a non-profit organization works that he does, Mike is a great asset to the Board.

Presidential Visits Planned

NCCNA President Bev Anderson will be making a number of trips this spring to visit existing support groups and to hold informational meetings in areas where new groups might be started. Planned visits in February include Turlock, Madera, and Merced; coming months will feature other groups. This is a chance to meet Bev and get some solid information about neuropathy, so if you are in the area, come by. The schedule is still being formed. For the current schedule, visit our website, www.pnhelp.org. Look under Support Groups, Group Activities or Happenings, News & Upcoming Events.

dogs – a Yorkie and a German Shorthair Pointer.

In 1995, Marsha was diagnosed as having Idiopathic Peripheral Neuropathy after years of feeling like her feet were asleep. It kept getting worse. She feels like her feet are constantly in ice water. Sometimes she has a burning feet experience, but usually they are cold. She has the sharp, hot needle pains as well. She is having some trouble with balance. Recently she was diagnosed as also having Fibromyalgia. She takes Neurontin, Lyrica, and Cymbalta.

About 2005, Marsha found The Neuropathy Association website and noted they were planning their second national conference to be held in Minneapolis near The Mall of America. She decided to go but to go a couple of days early so she could shop. When she checked into the hotel, she noticed that there was a Group Leaders Conference the day before the main conference. She asked what a Group Leader did and signed up to attend the pre-conference.

She attended the get-acquainted dinner that evening with Group Leaders from across the nation. During the dinner, each person at each table introduced themselves to all those in the room. When it was Marsha's turn, she stood up and said, "I'm from Reno, Nevada. When I return, I'm going to start a support group there."

It so happened that Bev Anderson, also present that night, had recently been instrumental in getting a group started in Reno. It had been meeting but the Group Leader had to resign so one of Bev's first goals upon her return was to find a leader for the Reno Group. When it was Bev's turn to introduce herself, she said, "It so happens that we have a group in Reno in need of a

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DISCOUNTS FOR NCCNA MEMBERS (CONTD.)

West Sacramento

Beverly's Never Just Haircuts and Lilly's Nails, 2007 West Capitol Ave., West Sacramento, CA
Tues. - Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-1, closed Sunday and Monday. Walk-Ins Welcome Hair - (916)372-5606 Nails (916)346-8342 The hairdressers and manicurist do great work and are real nice and accommodating. They have a number of older male and female clients, are familiar with neuropathy, and their prices are among the most reasonable around. 10% off the regular price. Sandra Vinson is one of their regular hair, manicure, and pedicure clients.

Additional Discounts

More discounts will be added when someone obtains the agreement of a business that they will offer a discount to members showing their cards. If you talk to someone, you can tell them that they will be listed each month in our newsletter so our members will know of their generosity and patronize their business. Call (877)622-6298 or e-mail info@pnhelp.org. An agreement form will be mailed to the business and upon its being signed and returned, their business will be added to the next newsletter.

Alpha Lipoic Acid...

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as studies have shown that lipoic acid speeds the removal of glucose (sugar) from the blood in people with diabetes.

Lipoic acid functions as a co-factor for a number of important enzymes responsible for the conversion of our food to energy, known as Adenosine tri-phosphate (ATP). ATP is required to provide energy for cellular function and is the energy source our muscles use for short bursts of power. Over the past few years, the pace of research into lipoic acid has increased dramatically. In 1995, Lester Packer, PhD, a professor of molecular biology at the University of California, Berkeley, published a lengthy review article on alpha-lipoic acid in *Free Radical Biology & Medicine* (1995;19:227-50). In April 1996, he presented a short review of it in the same journal (*FRBM*;20:625-6). According to Professor Packer, lipoic acid “could have far-reaching consequences in the search for prevention and therapy of chronic degenerative conditions”.

Several studies suggest that treatment with lipoic acid may help reduce pain, burning, itching, tingling, and numbness in people who have nerve damage (called peripheral neuropathy) caused by diabetes. Lipoic acid has been used for years for this purpose in Europe.

The fact that lipoic acid has a beneficial impact on diabetic neuropathy is also supported by other leading doctors in this field such as Dr. Ira D. Goldfine, director, Division of Diabetes & Endocrine Research, Mount Zion Medical Center, University of California San Francisco. However, the current oral formulations of lipoic acid are not of therapeutic value, and typically remain in the blood only a very short time, requiring either multiple daily doses or intravenous infusions. While more clinical studies are needed with controlled-release oral formulations of alpha-lipoic acid, it is already evident that such preparations should be very helpful for diabetics suffering from neuropathy. For well over 30 years physicians in Germany have been clinically treating diabetics with lipoic acid and in Germany to date, alpha-lipoic acid is an approved medical treatment for peripheral neuropathy, a common complication of diabetes. This is due to the fact that lipoic acid speeds the removal of glucose from the bloodstream, at least partly by enhancing insulin function, and it reduces insulin resistance, an underpinning of many cases of coronary heart disease and obesity. However, we need to note that the therapeutic dose for lipoic acid is 600 mg/day. In the United States, it is sold as a dietary supplement, usually as 50 mg tablets. In Australia it is usually 100mg as either S-Alpha Lipoic Acid, a synthetic, or R-S Alpha Lipoic Acid, a mixture of real and synthetic. Definitely not the therapeutic dose needed to provide the results that the German physicians are accustomed to working with.

How to get the best sources? Even though our bodies are capable of manufacturing lipoic acid, we still need to get additional supply from our diet or from supplements. In nature, the richest food source of alpha-lipoic acid is red meat; other sources include spinach, broccoli, yeast (particularly Brewer’s yeast), and certain organ meats (such as kidney and heart).

The two types of Alpha Lipoic acid. Not all lipoic acid supplements are the same; this is the sad bit about this wonderful antioxidant. Most of the Lipoic Acid on the market in Australia is not pure lipoic acid, known as R- Alpha Lipoic Acid. There is a pure R form of lipoic acid on the market but, it is a practitioner product and, you would need to ask for it specifically, otherwise we are wasting our money on the S form of lipoic acid, (S-Alpha Lipoic Acid), which is synthetic. A number of health supplement companies make a mixture of real and synthetic lipoic acid displayed on the label as R,S – Alpha Lipoic Acid. This means that you are buying both the natural and the synthetic form of lipoic in one. The only drawback is that you would not know how much of the R or S is in the formula.

As consumers, we have a lot of power in relation to the formulations of the supplements. All it takes is for us to be wiser and more selective. As supply and demand still dictates quality and quantity, if we only choose to use the R form lipoic acid, companies will inevitably succumb to this demand, in order to ensure their sales stay up and not down. When it comes to our health and supplements we deserve the highest and best quality and standards in supplements, otherwise there is no point in taking these supplements as we are not getting what we need!

The other advantage of taking the R form only is that we would use a smaller dose; 50 mg

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Alpha Lipoic Acid...

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of R-Lipoic Acid is equivalent to 100 mg of synthetic lipoic acid. A further advantage is that the body assimilates the R form much more readily than the S form. There is a clear advantage in adding the multi-tasking lipoic acid supplement to our health regime; first, it recycles other antioxidants, the good guys who halt premature ageing as well as degenerative conditions and, secondly, lipoic acid improves blood sugar levels in our blood and energy production in our muscles. However, the wonderful advantages from lipoic come only from the R-form. Even if our diet is high in red meat and spinach taking a little extra lipoic acid would prove beneficial for anyone who is active, lives a full life, likes occasional sweets and even if they do not have blood sugar irregularities, having an antioxidant recycling facility in our bodies would be a good start towards wellness and longevity.

About the author: Teya Skae M.A., B.A., Dip Health Sciences, Dip Clinical Nutrition Kinesiologist/Nutritionist/Writer, Health/Life Coach and Educator. Teya is the founder of Empowered Living www.empowered-living.com.au This article is reprinted from *NaturalNews*, with permission from the author.

Support Group Leaders...

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dogs – a Yorkie and a German Shorthair Pointer.

In 1995, Marsha was diagnosed as having Idiopathic Peripheral Neuropathy after years of feeling like her feet were asleep. It kept getting worse. She feels like her feet are constantly in ice water. Sometimes she has a burning feet experience, but usually they are cold. She has the sharp, hot needle pains as well. She is having some trouble with balance. Recently she was diagnosed as also having Fibromyalgia. She takes Neurontin, Lyrica, and Cymbalta.

About 2005, Marsha found The Neuropathy Association website and noted they were planning their second national conference to be held in Minneapolis near The Mall of America. She decided to go but to go a couple of days early so she could shop. When she checked into the hotel, she noticed that there was a Group Leaders Conference the day before the main conference. She asked what a Group Leader did and signed up to attend the pre-conference.

She attended the get-acquainted dinner that evening with Group Leaders from across the nation. During the dinner, each person at each table introduced themselves to all those in the room. When it was Marsha's turn, she stood up and said, "I'm from Reno, Nevada. When I return, I'm going to start a support group there."

It so happened that Bev Anderson, also present that night, had recently been instrumental in getting a group started in Reno. It had been meeting but the Group Leader had to resign so one of Bev's first goals upon her return was to find a leader for the Reno Group. When it was Bev's turn to introduce herself, she said, "It so happens that we have a group in Reno in need of a leader." Bev and Marsha met after the dinner. Marsha was a fast study at the conference. Upon her return, she picked up the reins and has done quite well. She reports she got only a short time to shop at the Mall but the conference was worth it and her husband was happy she spent less than his estimate.

Marsha has a variety of approaches in leading her group. They have a number of speakers that have proven quite capable. However, her group likes the themed general meetings well too. Recently, they emphasized laughter as it has been found good therapy for cancer and other disease patients. The meeting featured 30 minutes of jokes. The assignment she gave her group was to bring a joke to the next meeting. She likes to make assignments from time to time to more fully involve the people in their group.

This past year Marsha and Bev traveled together to lay the groundwork and have the first meeting of the Susanville and Alturas groups and also teamed to start the Truckee PN Group.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Here are current needs for help. If you or someone you know could help with any of these, please call us toll free at (877) 622-6298.

Newsletter layout:

We email the articles. The person using PageMaker (which we can provide) does the layout and emails it to our printer.

Enter data in an Excel form:

We need help entering data from membership forms.

Board members:

Special needs are in public relations, computer skills, and knowledge of nonprofit organization development, and accounting.



The Northern California Chapter
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tax exempt corporation)

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Question of the Month...

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are pricey—\$15 a pair MSRP, though I can usually find them for \$10-12 (which is still pricey, I think). They do last for a while. Because I want only these particular socks, I just search for RX Comfort Socks and look for the best price and availability. I've bought from a few online sources. I haven't found anything in a store that has worked well for me. —Penni L. Smith, Member-at-Large.

February Question of the Month: *What do you most want to see in the newsletter?* To reply, send an e-mail to info@pnhelp.org or send a letter to NCCNA, P.O. Box 6985, Auburn, CA 95604.

(You will notice that some of the longer, more detailed articles in the newsletter say that they are used by permission. This entails sending an e-mail or letter to the source listed and hopefully getting an answer back. Some publications charge a sizable amount for permission and we aren't going to do this. I can excerpt portions of articles, however. We will be increasingly using material from our medical advisors as we are able to obtain it. Your responses will guide us in what we ask them to send us.)

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Hope through caring and education

Our mission is to provide support, information and referral to people with neuropathy and to those who care about them, to inform and connect with the health care community, and to support research.

Dues - \$30 a year
(prorated for new members at \$2.50
per each month left in the year)
All contributions are tax-deductible

We are supported by dues paying members, contributions by members and friends, and, occasionally, small grants.

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