

The Dangers of Chitosan?

You've probably heard of chitosan. It has been heavily promoted in television infomercials, magazine and newspaper ads, and even on dozens of websites. Numerous claims have suggest that chitin and chitosan promote effortless weight-loss -- the chance to shed pounds without sacrificing your favorite foods or engaging in exercise and other activities that might cause you to break a sweat.

Although highly touted as a fat buster, fat absorber, fat trapper and fat magnet, no studies or evidence exists to support such claims. Those consuming large quantities of chitosan in order to lose weight have been doing so without scientific evidence to support that the product really works. In fact, a lawsuit was filed by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) against a company named SlimAmerica for advertising and violating federal consumer protection laws with the company's chitosan claims. The FTC won \$8.3 million for that judgment. Several other lawsuits were filed as well, all against the misleading advertisements of chitosan.

The basis of such judgments against the manufacturers of chitosan is the fact that no scientific evidence backs up their claims. Although it has been reported that there are no known dangers of chitosan, critics still warn of the potential dangers of chitosan and chitin.

The most common warning about the possible dangers of chitosan is that the composition of the chitin can vary depending on the seawater, the time of year, and the animal it is extracted from. Shrimp from different regions can absorb, through the natural chelation process, different impurities from the surrounding water. Chelation is the same process in which chitin captures fat in the intestine and sweeps it through the body before it is metabolized.

Experts further stress that although many brands advertise that they have pure chitin or chitosan, there is really no pure form. Chitosan-based products are always combined with lots and lots of other things, and those other things are very hard to remove.

Chitosan may also be a threat to those who have seafood allergies. It's no wonder that many critics (and even the makers of chitosan-based products themselves) warn that consumers with seafood allergies should avoid chitosan, as it is derived from crustacean shells.

The proliferation of chitosan further worries many the diet experts who believe that the promotional claims of the chitosan-based products offer false hope to very desperate, overweight people.

And, as was said earlier, scientific evidence just doesn't support their use. In fact, it was found that some of the studies conducted on chitosan were uncontrolled and involved only anecdotal evidence. There were no high-quality randomized double-blind placebo-controlled trials to support the efficacy of the product. Much worse is that those chitosan studies failed to comply with the minimum accepted scientific standards.

Were the various chitosan

weight-loss products as good as fat binder as their claims assert, they would also likely cause massive diarrhea, constipation, and strip the body of essential fat soluble. No matter how you look at it, chitosan is simply not a good choice when it comes to picking a weapon against being overweight.