Using Ketone Salts in the Elderly and People with Medical Conditions

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I receive emails and Facebook messages from many people who are using or want to use ketone salts for themselves or their loved ones, many of whom are elderly or may have medical conditions and want to make their life better. Here is some guidance for how to get started with ketone salts.

HOW KETONES COULD HELP

Ketone salts are nutritional supplements and have not been evaluated or approved by the FDA to treat any medical condition. On the other hand, there is scientific evidence that raising ketones can provide alternative fuel to the brain, reduce inflammation, and burn fat. Many people report increased energy, endurance, focus and mental clarity, improved mood and sleep, fewer aches and pains, and fat loss. Pruvit ketone salts were the first product marketed widely to the public, beginning in early 2016, which contains the actual ketone body betahydroxybutyrate attached to the minerals sodium, potassium, magnesium, and calcium. Many other ketone salts products are currently on the market.

TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR

As with any nutritional supplement, it is important for elderly people and people with medical conditions to consult with their physician before using ketone salts. The doctor could check blood levels of electrolytes, glucose, and minerals (sodium, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium) before you get started and after 3 to 6 weeks. Some people are very sensitive to sodium and could experience higher blood pressure, so blood pressure should also be monitored.

Many people need to watch their sodium intake, may be on diuretics that may cause loss of minerals from the body, and/or may be taking potassium supplements, and the content of these minerals varies widely between products. Therefore, it is important to compare the nutrition information on the label to find the best fit for you or your loved one. Your doctor or a dietitian can help you factor the sodium content of the ketone salts into your diet or adjust your potassium supplement to account for the amount of potassium in the ketone salts.

People with diabetes taking medications and/or insulin need to be aware that raising ketone levels with ketone salts may result in significantly lower blood sugar along with a drop in the amount of insulin the body produces.

Important: People taking SGLT2 inhibitors should consult their prescribing clinician before starting a ketogenic diet or fasting. These medicines can increase the risk of ketoacidosis, which may occur even when blood glucose is not markedly elevated.

To avoid abnormally low blood sugar, I recommend that you monitor your blood sugar closely and work with your doctor to make changes in your medications. Some people with

diabetes have reported that they can reduce their medications, as directed by their doctor, including insulin, rather quickly over days to several weeks, especially if using ketone salts in combination with a low-carbohydrate diet. Most ketone salts products contain minimal, if any, sugar and are sweetened with monk fruit, stevia, allulose and/or erythritol, a sugar alcohol.

Diabetic ketoacidosis is an abnormal condition in which there is very elevated blood sugar and insufficient insulin, usually in someone with diabetes. Levels of ketones are many times (20 to 50 times higher) than the levels you would get by taking a serving or two per day of ketone salts. The risk is extremely low but could be a problem for someone on the brink of diabetic ketoacidosis. Ketone levels can easily be monitored with a glucose/ketone monitor using ketone strips, available online without a prescription (check out keto-mojo.com). Ketone salts typically produce a boost in betahydroxybutyrate level in the 0.5 to 1.5 mmol range, compared to 10 to 25 mmol in diabetic ketoacidosis.

START SLOWLY AND INCREASE AS TOLERATED

While it is tempting to start with a whole serving in hopes of seeing maximum benefits right away, I recommend, after obtaining doctor's approval, that elderly people and those with medical conditions start with 1 or 2 level teaspoons per day, which would be equal to about 1/8 to 1/4 of a serving. If there is no issue, such as intestinal distress, you could increase by the same amount every few days until arriving at ½ to 1 full serving per day. The total amount could be divided into smaller portions throughout the day. Some people take as up to two servings per day. Ketone salts can have a dehydrating effect, especially in the beginning. Therefore, it is very important that the person taking ketone salts take plenty of water and other clear liquids.

Ketones can suppress appetite, which is great if you need to lose weight. If you are very thin, you might consider adding more calories to your diet with calorie dense foods such as coconut oil, olive oil, butter, cream, cheese, avocado, and nuts.

BRING THESE GUIDELINES TO YOUR DOCTOR

Ketone salts are so new that most doctors don't know about them yet much less the potential of ketones to provide alternative fuel to the brain and other organs, reduce inflammation, and burn fat. I suggest that you take a copy of these guidelines to your doctor to help the doctor monitor your progress. Many doctors decide to pass this information on to other patients when they see improvement in just one of their patients.

Explore ketone supplements on my website

Medical disclaimer: This article provides general educational information and is not a substitute for individualized medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Consult your healthcare professional before changing your diet, taking ketone supplements, or changing medications. Do not stop or adjust prescribed medication on your own.