

# Glutathione: A New Approach to Healing the Body

By Michelle Alpert, D.O.

The world we're living in today is a toxic minefield—from vaccines to pesticides, to antibiotic-laden foods, to mercury-poisoned fish, to pollution both indoors and outdoors. It's no wonder so many people are suffering from fatigue and chronic illness, as well as chronic infections with viruses, bacteria and fungi. In order to detoxify, I recommend a very effective detoxification "drip" to my patients with a special emphasis on glutathione.

## THE DRIP

This specialized "detox" intravenous drip is one that has helped patients with chronic fatigue syndrome, lyme disease, multiple sclerosis and Guillain-Barre syndrome. It contains typical vitamins and minerals like Vitamin C, calcium, magnesium, B5 and b6, but more importantly, it contains precursors to glutathione, as well as preservative-free glutathione itself. The precursors include two amino acids, glycine and cysteine. Together with glutathione, they pack a powerful punch that truly assists the body in meeting the demands of modern life.

There is a remarkable amount of evidence that glutathione is hugely important in detoxification, and has so many benefits that it can help patients with a range of conditions. Glutathione is found in every cell in your body. Glutathione scavenges free radicals, detoxifies heavy metals, helps ferry amino acids into the cells, helps in bile production, and much more. Because of all its capacities, glutathione is crucial in maintaining immunity. We don't get a lot of glutathione in our diet and even then, not much is absorbed directly into the blood. Glutathione is synthesized by our bodies from amino acids. If our bodies cannot make enough glutathione to keep up with the chronic toxic load from infections and poisons, we may end up with immune dysfunction. Stress can also deplete glutathione, because increased adrenaline suppresses glutathione production.

In animal studies, glutathione has been shown to protect against liver cancer; it has also been used in humans to protect them from kidney damage from chemotherapy drugs. It protects kidney function in patients undergoing bypass surgery. In aerosol form, glutathione quenches inflammation in cystic fibrosis patients. This wonderful substance has even been shown to increase insulin production in older individuals who have impaired sugar metabolism. Glutathione also seems to inhibit herpes viruses and has been shown to help reduce viral load in hepatitis C patients.

David Perlmutter, a Florida neurologist, found that intravenous glutathione helps relieve the symptoms of Parkinson's disease. Glutathione increases sensitivity to dopamine, which is depleted in Parkinson's. It may also protect against neurotoxins that may be implicated in the disease. Dr Perlmutter gave 1400 milligrams of intravenous glutathione three times a week to his Parkinson's patients, whose symptoms improved while they were able to reduce the amount of their drugs.

Similarly, Dr. Patricia Kane and Dr. Neil Speight developed an effective approach to chronic fatigue, lyme disease and neurological illnesses by detoxifying the body with intravenous glutathione and intravenous lipids. As they write in the *Townsend Newsletter*, "GSH infusion by fast intravenous push has been a remarkable tool to unload the body's burden of heavy metals and neurotoxins in both pediatric and adult patients." In fact, even mainstream medicine is beginning to recognize the importance of glutathione. A recent article in *Family Practice Magazine* found that people who regularly took Tylenol had a higher incidence of asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. This means that Tylenol was somehow damaging lung tissue. The authors of the article hypothesized that Tylenol does this by destroying glutathione levels in the liver. I believe it is not just the lungs that suffer and that adequate glutathione is necessary to protect all the organs in your body.

In my own practice, I either give glutathione alone in a saline solution, or I add glutathione as a "chaser" at the very end of a specialized detox drip, to help prevent any oxidation—since glutathione oxidizes easily when exposed to air or in the presence of certain minerals. I have given this to patients with multiple sclerosis, chronic fatigue, HIV, lyme disease, Guillain-Barre syndrome, hepatitis C, or just garden variety stress and fatigue. One hepatitis C patient's liver values returned to normal and she resumed a full teaching schedule at her university after a series of detox drips. Another patient with chronic lyme disease finds that weekly detox drips with glutathione improve her neurological symptoms of buzzing, burning and fatigue. My own nurse uses glutathione in fighting off colds. And

I myself take a detox drip with glutathione weekly.

Because oral glutathione is not normally well absorbed orally, I have also begun to experiment with nebulized glutathione, which requires a prescription. Patients can then take glutathione at home under professional guidance, between detox drips. According to a study in *Alternative Medicine Review* in 2000, nebulized glutathione has had remarkable success in emphysema and other lung disorders such as asthma and bronchitis. It appears that inhalation may have a systemic effect. Some patients are having even greater success with this combination.

For those who do not have access to treatment with intravenous glutathione at their doctor's, whey protein has been found to increase cellular glutathione. Two popular whey proteins are *ImmunePro* and *Immucol*. In addition, a supplement is now available from Wellness Pharmacy, a compounding pharmacy in Alabama, in a liposomal form for efficient oral absorption. I have begun recommending this to my patients for daily use. ■

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