

L-Lysine

Also called lysine | Amino Acids And Related Compounds

What Is It?

Lysine is one of the building blocks your body uses to make protein. Your body cannot make it, so you need it from food. Getting enough protein usually supplies enough lysine. Taking extra is different from meeting a normal food need. [1]

Why People Take It - And How Strong the Research Is

Preventing cold sores | MIXED, LIMITED EVIDENCE. Some small studies reported fewer outbreaks, but results are inconsistent. A Cochrane review found no convincing evidence of a preventive benefit. Reliable benefit and an effective dose have not been established. [2]

Treating an existing cold sore | NOT ENOUGH EVIDENCE. Lysine has not been reliably shown to make an active outbreak heal faster. Do not rely on it in place of antiviral medicines when those are needed. [2,3]

Energy, stress or bone health | UNPROVEN CLAIMS. Lysine has normal roles in the body, but this does not establish that extra supplements improve these problems in people who get enough from food. [1]

Does It Cure Herpes Or Prevent Spreading It?

No reliable evidence shows that lysine cures herpes or prevents transmission. Cold sores can spread to others. A clinician can advise on antiviral treatment and ways to reduce transmission. Cold sores and canker sores inside the mouth are different problems. [2,3]

Side Effects And Important Safety Concerns

Supplement studies report stomach symptoms such as nausea, abdominal discomfort or diarrhea. Long-term high doses should be avoided without medical supervision. Check first if you have kidney disease, diabetes or take medicines that lower blood sugar. [1,4]

Avoid use during pregnancy or breastfeeding unless your clinician specifically advises it. Ask before giving single amino acid supplements to a child. Seek prompt care for sores near an eye, severe symptoms, or outbreaks when your immune system is weakened. [1,3]

Questions To Ask Your Doctor Or Pharmacist

Are these actually cold sores? Would an antiviral work better? Is a trial of lysine reasonable? What benefit should I track, and when should I stop if it does not help?

Evidence labels describe research, not a guarantee of personal benefit or safety.

Where To Find Additional Information

1. [Stanford Medicine - Lysine](#)
2. [Cochrane - Preventing cold sores](#)
3. [Mayo Clinic - Cold sore diagnosis and treatment](#)
4. [PubMed - Review of lysine supplement safety](#)

Sources checked October 17, 2026. This guide is for learning, not for diagnosing or treating an illness. Talk with your healthcare provider before changing prescribed treatment.