

# EVENING PRIMROSE OIL

## WHAT IS IT?

EPO is from the seed of the evening primrose plant and contains an omega-6 essential fatty acid called gamma-linolenic acid (GLA) which is believed to be its active ingredient.

## WHAT IS IT USED FOR?

Hot flashes (possibly ineffective)

Breast pain

PMS

Eczema

High Cholesterol

Osteoporosis

Diabetic Neuropathy

## RESEARCH/STUDIES

- There is mixed data on the effects of EPO on breast cancer cells
- Studies combining EPO and Tamoxifen for the treatment of breast cancer have shown quicker tumor response to the Tamoxifen.
- One clinical trial found that EPO was not any better than a placebo in relieving hot flashes.
- Some studies indicate EPO may decrease the risk of seizures, other studies show it may increase the risk of seizures, especially in patients with schizophrenia on phenothiazines.

## IS IT SAFE?

- EPO is likely safe when used orally in recommended doses for up to one year.
- Long term safety information greater than 1 year is not available.

## SIDE EFFECTS WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS

Generally well tolerated; other side effects include:

Headache

Low Blood pressure

Nausea

Bloating

Gas

Seizures

Increased bowel movements (diarrhea)

Skin Rash

Stomach pain

#### THINGS TO REMEMBER

- EPO does not appear to affect menopausal symptoms but more studies are needed
- EPO may enhance the effects of Tamoxifen.