

The Optimum Maca Dosage?

BY [EDWARD CLEMENTS](#) ON DECEMBER 16, 2012 ·

Maca is a potent aphrodisiac and energy tonic, but too high an intake can lead to restlessness and insomnia. Find out the maca dosage you need to benefit without experiencing maca root side effects.

In that article I go into depth about what maca can and cannot do for you:

Maca improves glucose tolerance dramatically in only a few weeks and raises body temperature through modulation of the endocrine system. Maca also improves sperm counts and combats erectile dysfunction in men and fights infertility in women.

I note that most studies show that maca does not actually alter hormone levels, despite claims to the contrary by many sellers. However, there are a couple of recent studies that do suggest that maca can increase testosterone levels.

Some bodybuilding coaches are recommending that trainers increase their maca dosage to upwards of 4 tablespoons per day to improve hormone levels.

I'm a big fan of maca and want to clarify what I feel is an effective dose for treating various problems/ issues and for general health improvement.

The vast majority of people and trainers will not need to take nearly as much as 4 tablespoons a day— normally amounts like 1 teaspoon every other day will be all you need to experience the many benefits that maca has to offer

Four tablespoons a day?

Some bodybuilding nutritionists recommend a maca dosage of 4 tablespoons a day to increase DHEA and subsequently testosterone levels.

The argument is made that you can eat as much maca as you want because it's a natural food. I find this argument to be overly simplistic, however, as people react differently to many different everyday foods and a whole lot of natural foods should, in my opinion, be eaten in limited quantities.

Too stimulating?

Maca is considered to be an adaptogen, a herb that exerts a normalising tonic effect on the body, but I think it's fair to say that, whilst maca helps people with a wide range of different hormonal problems, it is stimulating and these effects may increase with a higher dosage.

I expect that sensitive people will suffer from problems such as worsened sleep quality or mild headaches if they choose to take such a high daily maca dosage for a period of time. Not all people will react to maca in this way though...

If you regularly take 4 tablespoons a day and don't notice any negative effects then that's great, but I'd question whether you are building up a tolerance to maca and whether you would not gain the same hormonal benefits from taking a much smaller dosage.

Traditionally used as a condiment:

It appears that maca was traditionally generally eaten as a condiment.

Lots of foods are 'natural' and good for us but are not great when taken in huge quantities – obvious examples are cocoa and coffee beans that are high in caffeine, or healthy natural sweeteners like raw honey that are too high in fructose to eat huge amounts of each day.

A bit Sugary...

One of the problems that I can see with taking a higher maca dosage such as 4 tablespoons a day is that maca is actually fairly sugary. Quite a lot of this sugar is in the form of free fructose.

I'm not one of those people that think all sugar, be it natural or refined, is the same, but I do tend to limit the amount of sweet fruit I eat to keep my overall daily fructose load low and my blood sugar levels even.

Maca has been shown to quite dramatically improve glucose tolerance (1)so, if you like taking a higher maca dosage, I wouldn't worry about the sugar in it. But for those of you who, like myself, feel better on a low sugar diet, including natural sugar, I would suggest you take a lower maca dosage like 1 to 3 teaspoons a day.

Dried maca powder contains around 1.1 grams of sugar per teaspoon, so 4 tablespoons will actually contain quite a lot. It might be good to take maca after working out if you choose to take a higher dose. At this time the body benefits from the ingestion of sugars, even fructose, and maca's hormone rejuvenation properties may help you to recover from working out more quickly.

A lower dose works fine...

Studies show that maca dosages of around 3.5 grams are effective in treating hormonal issues such as 'anxiety, depression and sexual dysfunction' in women(2), and many other problems such as adrenal fatigue, low body temperature etc. benefit from similar doses.

I'm not saying that taking a high dose will damage your health in any way, I'm just pointing out that a low dose, i.e. 1 to 3 teaspoons, is extremely effective and may be all you need.

Pretty expensive!

Even if you do the sensible thing and buy maca in powder form and in quite large quantities, it is a pretty expensive supplement. A 16 oz. bag of maca powder will last quite a long time if you take about a teaspoon a day; it's gonna get used up pretty quickly, however, if you take 4 tablespoons a day.

If you take a higher dose of maca and find it noticeably improves your weights training, or any other issue you have, when a lower dose doesn't, then it is probably worth the expense. If you don't, then be confident taking the lower dosage without feeling that your missing out...

My maca dosage recommendations:

I would recommend you take between 1 to 3 teaspoons a day of maca powder, and not to worry if you miss a day here or there.

Whilst maca is a natural food it is, in a sense, a stimulant. Good rules for using any herb is to take a couple of days off each week, or a week off each month etc. so that you don't build up a tolerance to it and also so that it doesn't build up to toxic levels in the system.

Maca appears to be non toxic so you certainly can take it every day if you like, but people who are sensitive to stimulating herbs may experience side effects such as insomnia from too much energy if they take a high maca dosage every day.

I personally don't choose to take many supplements every day because I don't like to feel that I'm dependent on them. If you're like me then a good strategy for you would be to take a few teaspoons of maca every other day.

Finally...

Maca is a great addition to your diet and can really help people to improve their hormone balances.

Take 4 tablespoons a day if this helps you but don't feel obliged to follow such advice as small doses are extremely effective.

As with other natural foods such as coffee beans and unfiltered honey, maca may do you more good when taken in relatively small quantities than in large amounts.

Ed Clements is a fitness and health writer who offers advice to men and women explaining how to optimise hormone balance through diet, training, lifestyle improvement and through intelligent supplementation.

References and Footnotes:

(1)<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17333395>

(2)Beneficial effects of *Lepidium meyenii* (Maca) on psychological symptoms and measures of sexual dysfunction in postmenopausal women are not related to estrogen or androgen content. *Menopause*. 2008 Sep 6.

<http://www.muscle-health-fitness.com/maca-dosage.html/>