

Carnitor (L-Carnitine)

Carnitor (L-Carnitine) is a diet supplement used to prevent and treat low blood levels of carnitine. Carnitine is a substance made in the body from meat and dairy products. It helps the body use certain chemicals (long-chain fatty acids) for energy and to keep you in good health. Low blood levels of carnitine may occur in people whose bodies cannot properly use carnitine from their diets. Symptoms are low glucose, muscle weakness and low energy. It is one of the supplements being used more recently with PWS along with CoQ10 and fish oil.

(Q) More questions are coming to PWSA (USA) on this supplement. Are there any side effects of concern? How do they decide on dosage? Is there any particular brand that is better?

Janalee Heinemann
Director of Research & Medical Affairs

(A) From Dr. Dan Driscoll & Dr. Jennifer Miller

- You are not exactly sure what you are getting with an over the counter preparation and they are not all the same. That is why we prefer the prescription – Carnitor (L-carnitine)
- We like to check a level first before prescribing and then later if the child is taking the medicine.
- It should be done under the supervision of a physician.
- It seems to help some, but not all so there is no sense using it for years if you do not see an effect in the first 3-6 months unless there is a deficiency.
- 50 mg/kg per DAY for children is a reasonable dose to start, but depending upon levels it can be titrated up or down. We usually divide the dose 2-3 times per day.
- Side effects are minimal ("fishy" smell and diarrhea if the dose is too high) and can be reduced if necessary by starting at a lower dose and then gradually increasing. Some parents are seeing some irritability when it is started which they are attributing to the dose being too high as it goes away when the dose is decreased.