

Ahiflower Oil—The Rising GLA Alternative to Evening Primrose for Women & Vegans

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Introduction/Overview

- There are numerous choices in essential fatty acid (EFA) supplementation
- EFAs are critical components of health and wellness
- Our current intake of EFAs is considered out of balance as omega-6 from processed food choices predominate, leading to an increased propensity for inflammation.
- EFAs support health and function in a number of ways and are important considerations for inflammatory management, women's health, skin care and vegetarians/vegans.
- This paper is intended to provide a better understanding of the importance of a specific EFA derivative—GLA and its role in wellness—and of the comparative benefits of Ahiflower oil, the newest and most balanced dietary GLA source.

GLA Health Science Drove Plant-Based Oil Uses Globally

For more than 3 decades, clinical researchers have uncovered the many health benefits of plant-based gamma linolenic acid (GLA) for skin, hormonal, digestive and women's reproductive health. *Breast Cancer Wellness* magazine's Christine Horner, MD summarized GLA's multiple benefits as ranging "...from lowering your risk of breast cancer, to helping reduce hot flashes and symptoms of PMS, to improving arthritis, and inflammatory skin

conditions including eczema and psoriasis."^{1,2} Strong scientific evidence shows dietary GLA's natural anti-inflammatory effects in the body, inhibiting and even reversing the progression of chronic inflammatory skin, digestive, joint, immune/respiratory, and gynecological conditions.³⁻⁶

Especially for women, these clinically recognized benefits led to borage oil and evening primrose oil being commonly recommended as key dietary GLA sources, starting in the 1980's right to the present day. The combined annual turnover of these two oils is now more than \$250 million, with hundreds of thousands of people looking, moving, and feeling better thanks to increased GLA intakes.^{7,8} Yet as noted below, this is still a relatively small uptake compared to the populations that could benefit.

Following in the footsteps of borage and evening primrose oil, echium seed oil, another GLA source, began to see commercial uptake in topical skin care and dietary uses starting in the 2000's after clearing European and FDA food safety reviews. More recently in 2016, a genetically modified safflower oil called Sonova[®] was cleared for safe use by the FDA. Naturally occurring safflower does not contain GLA, but through genetic engineering a new strain was developed to contain approximately 45% GLA, however Sonova oil is not yet readily available to consumers in North America.

Plant-based GLA oils, as a category, have been recommended and consumed for specific conditions for many years. Less known but worth mentioning is their presence in many omega 3-6-9 formulations that are typically blends along with fish, algal, and flaxseed oils, providing therapeutic levels of GLA, also known as the so-called 'good omega 6' for its generally accepted anti-inflammatory support functions.^{9,10}

The Dietary Omega Conundrum

Yet despite decades of compelling clinical science and health practitioner recommendations, the market for GLA shares a similar paradox with the omega 3 market globally. Overall, people's use of supplemental GLA and omega 3's are significantly below recommended dietary intake levels to overcome recognized deficiencies and related chronic health challenges that arise. They are truly essential nutrients for health and wellness, yet unlike multi-vitamins