

# Los Angeles Times

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## SUPPLEMENTS

# Pine-bark extract has many uses

Pycnogenol is extracted from the bark of a coastal pine tree, grown in southern France, that is commonly harvested to make paper and lumber. The compound is a mixture of plant chemicals known as procyanidins, which are types of flavonoids. The procyanidins found in pycnogenol also are abundant in grapes, apples, cocoa, peanuts, blueberries and cranberries.

— ELENA CONIS

**Uses:** Pycnogenol is marketed for a range of maladies, including allergies, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, high cholesterol, cirrhosis, immune deficiency, male infertility, heart disease and vascular diseases. In Europe, it's used to treat varicose veins and lymphedema, or swelling caused by damaged lymph nodes. In China, it's sometimes used to treat skin pigmentation disorders.

**Dose:** Usually, 25 to 200 milligrams a day in pill form.

**Precautions:** Pycnogenol is considered safe and rarely causes side effects.

**Research:** Lab tests suggest pycnogenol has antioxidant



ERIC BOYD *Los Angeles Times*

**VERSATILE:** *Pycnogenol may have antioxidant abilities.*

and anti-inflammatory abilities. Animal tests have shown that the compound improves circulation and immune function, reduces unwanted blood clots and swelling and offers protection from some cancer-causing chemicals. A national study is evaluating pycnogenol's

effects on lymphedema in breast cancer survivors.

*Dietary supplement makers are not required by the U.S. government to demonstrate that their products are safe or effective. Ask your healthcare provider for advice on selecting a brand.*