



# IS CARNITINE FISHY BODY ODOR CAUSED BY SUPPLEMENTS A REAL THING?

[HOME](#) / [BLOG](#)

[< PREVIOUS](#) / [NEXT >](#)

by Stephanie Blanchard

I finally returned to the gym after a two-year hiatus. Armed with new bluetooth earbuds and comfy workout leggings, I hopped on the treadmill and started it up. About 10 minutes into my workout, I smelled something fishy. I thought maybe one of the gym employees reheated their fish dinner in the microwave. Who does that!?! Not to be deterred, I continued on. No bad odor was going to stop me from my 20-minute high-intensity cardio session. After all, most fitness centers have a certain aroma with sweaty bodies everywhere, especially after spin class.

Two days later, I returned to the gym. (Go me—getting there two days in the same week!) I started up the treadmill and again noticed that fishy odor. I recognized the good-looking guy running on the treadmill next to me. He was also at the gym the last time I was here. I noticed him previously because he was tan, handsome, and very muscular—obviously a bodybuilder. I admired his dedication to fitness, and his hard work showed,

## RECENT ARTICLES

13 Surprising Ways To Reduce Body Odor

January 10, 2020

Being a Woman Ain't for Sissies

January 08, 2020

Body Odor, Microbiome, & Why It Matters

January 03, 2020

literally. Though, I wondered if he was the source of the odor. Perhaps he took some type of fish oil supplement? I once bought some fish oil capsules, but the bottle's fishy smell put me off.

On my third trip to the gym the following week, I didn't smell anything other than the ever-present smell of sweat. Coincidentally, the bodybuilder was nowhere in sight. That further convinced me the funky odor was, indeed, coming from him.

The next time I went to the gym, my workout buddy, Ashley\*, and I took a spin class. Guess who was in it? The bodybuilding guy from last week. Turns out, his name is Justin\*, and he was definitely the source of the odor because the spin room stunk like fish. It couldn't be a coincidence that every time I saw him at the gym, the place smelled like a fish market.

Before class started, I overheard him talking to another bodybuilder. Justin was telling his beefy buddy about carnitine. I had heard of this supplement in my previous gym-going life. It's a popular supplement in the bodybuilding world. I vaguely recalled that carnitine can help you build muscle. It dawned on me that maybe carnitine supplements can also cause fishy body odor. I made a mental note to google it later. I'm a curious person by nature and just had to know. I also like to be helpful. Maybe I could recommend some Lume Deodorant. Would that be weird or possibly offend him? Probably.

After the class was over, my friend Ashley, who is single, confessed that she found Justin attractive. Since Ashley visits the gym way more than me, she regularly sees Justin and has had several conversations with him. He even asked her on a date once, but she declined. Ashley told me every time she talks to Justin, she smells something fishy. She couldn't possibly go out with someone who has an offensive body odor. That's why she didn't accept his dinner request. Ashley was concerned that he had a medical condition that caused his smell, and she felt terrible about the situation. I told her my theory. We both hoped it was the carnitine supplements that caused his fishy body odor.

## COULD IT BE CARNITINE FISHY BODY ODOR?

Later that night, I opened my laptop and typed "fishy body odor and carnitine supplements" into the search engine. I came across some testimonials on bodybuilding website forums. One of the threads noted that carnitine supplements build muscle and lead to fishy odor syndrome.

### Natural vs. Organic Deodorant

January 01, 2020

### Essential Oils: Why Have They Become So Popular?

December 27, 2019

### Smells Trigger the Best Memories

December 25, 2019

### What Your Partner May Not be Telling You

December 20, 2019

### Lume Fought Off the Odor that Surgery Left Behind

December 19, 2019

### Lume Empowers Soulful Artist with Lasting Confidence

December 19, 2019

### Lume Makes Adventure Smell Better at Any Altitude

December 19, 2019

Hmmm. While the forums are just personal experiences and not a substitute for professional medical advice, plenty of the participants expressed concerns about the supplement. Several of the bodybuilders shared that they worried about smelling fishy as a side effect of carnitine. Supplement enthusiasts chimed in and said that carnitine pills and powders can boost muscle and burn fat. A few posters wrote that they have heard about carnitine fishy body odor but haven't experienced it themselves.

After checking out the forums, I headed to the website belonging to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). I wanted to see if there was any medical literature on carnitine supplements. What I really wanted was to help Ashley go on that date.

## WHAT THE EXPERTS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT CARNITINE FISHY BODY ODOR

According to the NIH, ingesting 3 grams of carnitine supplements can cause some unpleasant side effects such as nausea and vomiting, stomach cramps, diarrhea, and a fishy body odor. However, the University of Maryland Medical Center's fact sheet on carnitine said that the side effect was rare. But perhaps, Justin takes a lot of carnitine. He may be one of those unlucky people who are prone to carnitine fishy body odor.

I also visited a popular website for bodybuilders, and one of the articles about carnitine supplements said it was safe. The author recommended taking 2 to 3 grams per day. He has a Ph.D. and seemed pretty knowledgeable. Nowhere did the article mention the supplement's potential smelly side effects.

Next, I visited the website of a national retailer of vitamins and health supplements. There were a lot of options for carnitine. One product recommended taking a 500-milligram pill per day. Another contained 2 grams of carnitine per serving (1000 milligrams in a gram). Since dietary supplements are unregulated, the recommended dosage varies by product and brand. There is little consensus by experts about how much carnitine to take.

Seeing so many choices for carnitine supplements made me even more curious about it. I read some of the product reviews, too. The way people talked about carnitine made it sound like the fountain of youth. Product reviews mentioned that the supplement helped with weight loss, fat burning, building muscle, and fatigue. I wondered if it could help me on my

fitness journey. I'd be sure to take less than 3 milligrams to be on the safe side.

Hesitant to try a new supplement, I definitely needed more information. The medical sources I googled said that a healthy person doesn't need carnitine supplements because most people make enough of it on their own. However, there are some medical conditions that carnitine supplements could help.

On the flip side, the alternative health and fitness websites were definitely pro carnitine. And, I also couldn't discount how many positive testimonials there were on the internet about the supplement. Here's a little background info on it in case you're curious like me.

## WHAT IS CARNITINE?

Carnitine is frequently called an amino acid. While the compound functions like one, it's not really one. Carnitine is made from lysine and methionine—two amino acids. The compound has two essential functions in cells. Carnitine helps with energy production by transporting fat into the mitochondria of the cells. If you remember from your high school biology class, mitochondria power cells by burning fat. Carnitine plays another key role by removing toxic substances from the mitochondria. Carnitine is found in skeletal and cardiac muscle that is powered by fatty acids. Most carnitine in our bodies is found in our muscles.

## WHY DO SOME PEOPLE TAKE CARNITINE SUPPLEMENTS?

The NIH doesn't consider carnitine an essential nutrient for most people. Certain foods contain carnitine, with red meat being the highest source. Fish, chicken, beans, milk, and avocado also contain some carnitine. With that said, people supplement with carnitine for a few reasons: to increase energy, burn fat, and build muscle.

Carnitine is often found in dietary products that claim to burn fat. This makes sense. As I learned earlier, carnitine transports fat into the cells. And, research suggests that carnitine supplements increase the amount of fat that cells burn. Other studies have suggested that carnitine supplements also increase blood flow, which can help you recover from a

workout.

According to the message boards I viewed, those trying to build muscle or lose weight often take carnitine before a workout to maximize how their bodies burn fat. People seem to love carnitine supplements. In product reviews, people said that taking carnitine supplements has helped them increase endurance while exercising and recover from intense muscle-building sessions. People with medical conditions, such as chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia, also credit carnitine supplements for increasing their energy levels.

The NIH says that carnitine has also been used for symptoms of aging, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, fatigue from chemo treatments, male infertility, and other conditions. Some studies find that carnitine supplements may benefit the cardiovascular system. Other research suggests that carnitine could be dangerous for the heart.

There are situations where carnitine supplements are medically necessary. A small percentage of people have rare conditions where their bodies do not make enough carnitine. Carnitine deficiency syndromes are life-threatening and require a pharmaceutical-grade version of the compound.

One source I read about a certain type of carnitine deficiency was interesting. It said that some people treated orally with carnitine for the disorder develop a fishy odor. Apparently, normal bacteria found in the bowel convert carnitine to trimethylamine—it's a stinky non-toxic compound. For this rare condition, patients are sometimes injected with carnitine instead of taking it orally to prevent the odor. Other patients receive an antibiotic to kill the odor-causing bacteria.

People without medical conditions that develop carnitine fishy body odor caused by taking supplements have few antidotes for the smell.

Now, let's get back to my story about Justin and Ashley.

## DID JUSTIN'S CARNITINE FISHY BODY ODOR EVER GO AWAY?

After my evening of carnitine fishy body odor research, I called Ashley to tell her what I found. I shared that I read some reviews of various carnitine supplements. I remembered one review where the buyer said that he's tried some carnitine products that made him smell fishy, but a particular

brand did not. However, that still didn't solve Justin's off-putting smell. I'm not the type of person who feels comfortable telling someone they stink, and neither is Ashley. So, we decided that eventually, Justin would find out about his fishy smell—perhaps from one of his bodybuilding buddies. Maybe someday, Ashley will be able to ask him out.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU EXPERIENCE CARNITINE FISHY BODY ODOR?

If you take high doses of carnitine for increasing fat loss, energy, or muscle mass and notice a fishy odor, you may be one of the unfortunate people that experience the smelly side effect of carnitine supplements. You could smell the fishy odor in your urine, sweat, or breath. Consider reducing your dose or trying another brand to see if those tactics take care of the smell.

What if you love the results of supplementing with carnitine and don't want to stop using it? Or maybe you smell something fishy on a friend or relative and don't want to speak up? There are options. If it's for a friend, casually mention in conversations that you heard Lume Deodorant prevents body odor. And if you're the source of the smell, you can experiment with our deodorant to treat the odor emanating from your sweat, anywhere on your external body.

## HOW CAN LUME DEODORANT HELP?

Before I get into how Lume solves B.O., here's a little science. A chemical reaction causes body odor—it happens to every human being on the planet. Bacteria living on our bodies feast on bodily fluids. The bacteria found on our skin consume sweat, semen, and urine, resulting in body odor. It's totally natural, though annoying.

Lume Deodorant works by inhibiting the bacteria's ability to react with the fluid, preventing body odor. The nice thing about our product is that you can use it anywhere on your external body. So, if you notice a strong odor from sweat, try Lume! Seriously it works. Unlike other deodorants, you can apply Lume anywhere you stink. Use it on underarms, feet, private parts, and skin folds.

And remember, carnitine fishy body odor isn't the only reason people may smell off. Body odor is a chemical reaction between normal bacteria and

bodily fluids. Everyone has it. If you're struggling with body odor, carnitine supplements or not, Lume Deodorant can help.

Also, be sure to check with your health care provider before starting any new regimen like carnitine supplements. They can react with certain medications and be harmful to people who have kidney disease or seizure disorders. As for me, I'm still on the fence about picking up a bottle of the stuff. With that said, I wouldn't give up my Lume Deodorant for anything. I love how it keeps me smelling fresh no matter the situation, including at the gym.

\*Names have been changed to protect privacy.



STEPHANIE BLANCHARD



## ALSO IN BLOG



### 13 SURPRISING WAYS TO REDUCE BODY ODOR

by Sarah Thomas



### BEING A WOMAN AIN'T FOR SISSIES

by Annie Hanson



### BODY ODOR, MICROBIOME, & WHY IT MATTERS

by Ashley Cummings

# OUR MOST POPULAR PRODUCTS



Lavender Sage |  
Deodorant Stick

ADD TO CART  
\$13.99



Lavender Sage |  
Deodorant Bundle

ADD TO CART  
\$29.99 ~~\$32.98~~



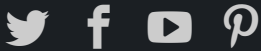
Unscented | Deodorant  
Stick

ADD TO CART  
\$13.99



Unscented | Deodorant  
Stick 2-Pack

ADD TO CART  
\$25.98 ~~\$27.98~~



## MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

If you wish to return your product, we will gladly refund one opened item on your first purchase within 30 days, minus return shipping.

\*Mini tubes (.75oz) and Soaps (5oz) are final sale only and not eligible for a return or refund.

**Read our full return policy.**

**Shop**

**eGift Cards**

**Sticker**

## FREE U.S. SHIPPING OVER \$20

Lume offers FREE first class shipping via USPS throughout the United States, for orders over \$20

## CONTACT

**Contact Us** for support.

We respond to emails within 2 business days.

**Affiliate Program**

**About Subscriptions**

**Privacy Policy** **Cookie Policy**

**Sitemap**

Made in the USA.