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# From Salad Dressing to Lifesaving Antidote: The Unexpected Path of ILEs

Few medical treatments have a history as surprising—and flavorful—as intravenous lipid emulsions (ILEs). What started as a nutritional aid for parenteral nutrition patients has grown into a crucial rescue therapy for severe poisonings. At its heart? A simple principle familiar to any home cook: emulsification. Adding egg to stabilize an oil-and-vinegar mixture creates mayonnaise. Replacing vinegar with water and adding a bit of glycerin results in Intralipid—a sterile soybean oil emulsion stabilized by egg phospholipids. The same process that makes your salad dressing creamy also enables lipid droplets to circulate safely in the bloodstream.

The medical journey began in 1962 when Intralipid was used as a caloric source. For many years, it was used exclusively for nutrition. Then, in 1998, it was discovered that lipid infusion could effectively treat bupivacaine-induced cardiac arrest. By 2006, the first human case of “lipid rescue” was documented. Today, ILEs are the primary treatment for local anesthetic systemic toxicity and are increasingly employed for overdoses of lipophilic drugs—from ivermectin to calcium channel blockers.

In this issue’s [“A Guide to Intravenous Lipid Emulsion Therapy”](#) (p. 62), Dr. Emilia Terradas Crespo explores this impressive therapy within veterinary practice, discussing its mechanisms, dosing, and uses in common animal poisonings. The “lipid sink” and “lipid shuttle” models explain how these emulsions trap toxins and deliver them to detox organs. From mayonnaise to medical marvel—not bad for a salad dressing.

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