

Merica Labz HOLLOW POINT: Merica's Take on Turk

written by Mike Roberto | May 26, 2022

Merica Labz Hollow Point has arrived, featuring the patriotic brand's take on turkesterone. Inside, you get 1000 milligrams of A. Turkestanica (10% turkesterone) coupled with epicatechin!



Merica Labz – the brand that goes by the tagline *Never Big Enough* – wants your muscles to have muscles of their own. That's why they've released a *second* muscle building supplement to put alongside *Full Metal Jacket*.

What do you name a supplement that can *defend* you by disrupting estrogen, promoting anabolic activity? You name it after *defensive ammo*:

Merica Labz Hollow Point: Merica's Take on Turkesterone

Merica Labz Hollow Point is the next muscle builder to stack with Full Metal Jacket – along with the *Super Sized* weight gainer and creatine-based *BOOM Pre-Workout* if you're really smart. It features a simple yet powerful formula, pairing estrogen-disrupting *Ajuga Turkestanica* (standardized for 10% *turkesterone*) alongside myostatin-limiting *epicatechin*.

In this article, we dig into the known science on the phytoecdysteroids in *A. Turkestanica* (which includes *ecdysterone* as well as *turkesterone*), then look at some recent research on epicatechin, the epic force found in dark chocolate. First, let's check on availability through PriceFlow, but note that the *official* launch is June 13, 2022:

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Hollow Point Ingredients

In two capsules, Merica Labz loads you up with the following:

- **Ajuga Turkestanica (std. 10% turkesterone) – 1,000 mg**

	Amount Per Serving	%DV
Ajuga Turkestanica (Std. 10% Turkesterone) (Whole Herb)	1,000 mg	**
Epicatechin (Camellia sinensis) (Bean) (Std. 90% Epicatechin)	300 mg	**
Bioperine® (Piper nigrum) (Fruit) (Std. to 95% Piperine)	10 mg	**

**Daily value not established

OTHER INGREDIENTS: Gelatin, Rice Flour, Magnesium Stearate, Silicon Dioxide, FD&C Blue #1, Titanium Dioxide.

Serious gains in just two capsules

It's the talk of the town in 2022, and Hollow Point is Merica Labz' way of bringing it to their muscle-building party – **turkesterone**! This fascinating molecule is actually one of *eight* known anabolic compounds found in **ajuga turkestanica**, which Merica Labz is standardizing for 10% turkesterone (100 milligrams in each serving).

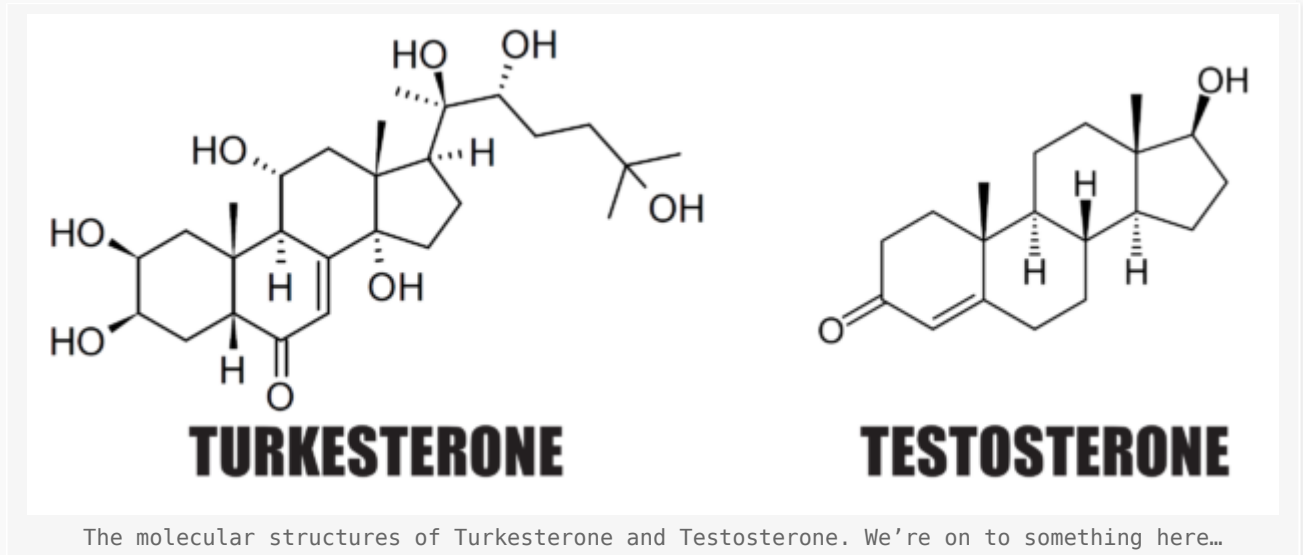
There are two things to break down regarding *ajuga turkestanica* supplements:

1. Research on whole plant extracts (which includes known muscle-building agent, *ecdysterone*)
2. Research on *turkesterone* itself

Let's start wide and then narrow down to turkesterone.

***Ajuga Turkestanica* and phytoecdysteroids**

The *ajuga turkestanica* plant contains many **phytoecdysteroids**, which are “plant androgens” that regulate reproduction and development. Like our own testosterone, they're synthesized from cholesterol,[1] and they just so happen to be *structured* like testosterone too:



Displacing estrogen

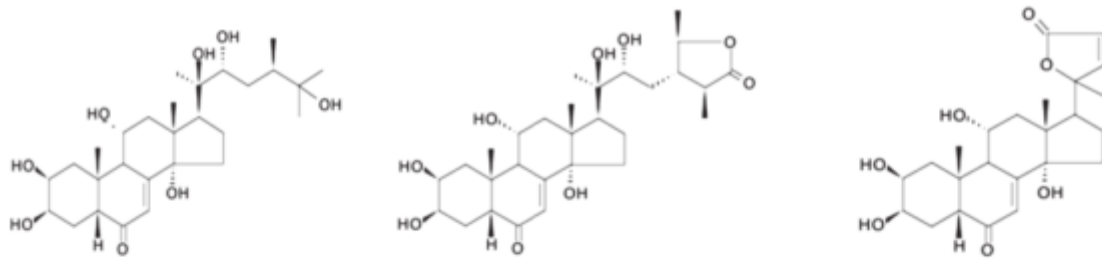
There are many of these phytoecdysteroids in *A. turkestanica*, and many of them are able to *interfere with estrogen*, displacing estrogen from the receptor, which in turn can promote anabolic effects.[2,3]

Animal research backs this up – giving rats phytoecdysteroids leads to lower serum estrogen levels![3] Even better, most of these phytoecdysteroids *don't seem to interact with androgen receptors (ARs)*,[2,4] leading researchers to believe that they won't yield the negative feedback effects of stronger anabolics. This is at least the case of *ecdysterone*, one of the two most anabolic constituents discussed below.

The major eight

There are at least *eight* known ecdysteroids found in *Ajuga turkestanica*[5] – the most prominent of which are **ecdysterone** (*20-Hydroxy-ecdysone* or “20HE”) and **turkesterone**.

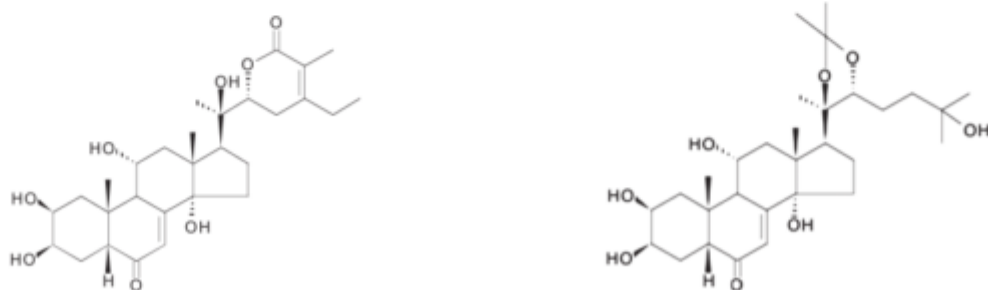
It's definitely possible that there are more – researchers who evaluated the plant using incredible amounts of spectral imaging concluded, “*Thus Ajuga turkestanica contains a complex cocktail of ecdysteroids, and additional studies on less polar fractions will probably allow the isolation of even more compounds.*”[5]



New Phytoecdysteroids



Found in A. Turkestanica



in 2015

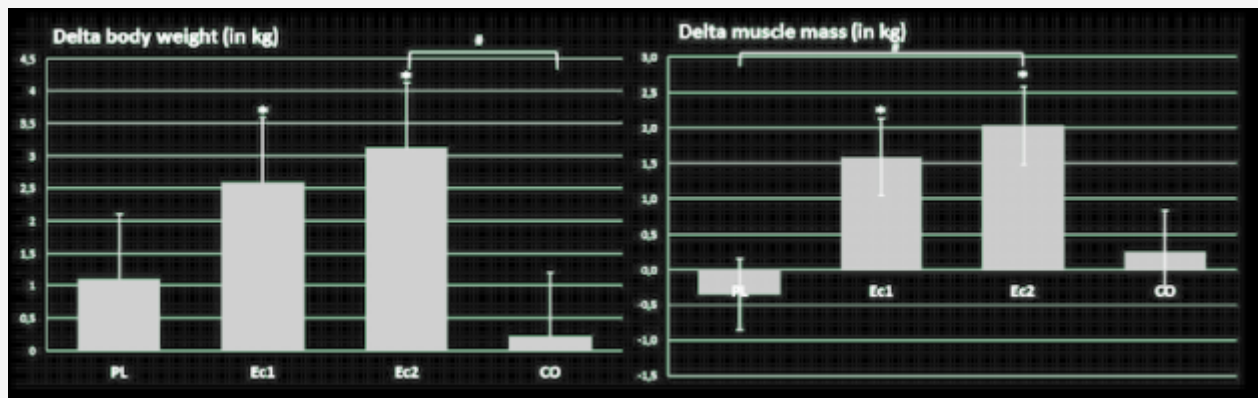
Above and beyond turkesterone and ecdysterone, researchers are frequently finding finding new phytoecdysteroids in A. Turkestanica plant extracts.[5]

There's more research on ecdysterone, so let's get into that first:

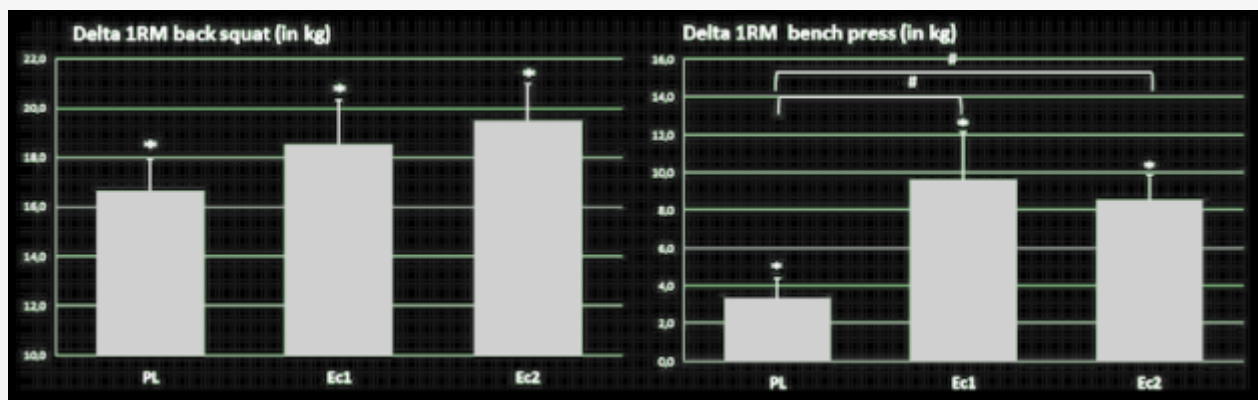
Ecdysterone: well-researched plant anabolic

Starting with animal models, we've seen ecdysterone reduce serum estrogen levels while increasing IGF-1, resulting in increased muscle fiber size.[2,3] Research translated from Russian journals in the late 1990s also showed anabolic activity in ecdysterone (as well as turkesterone).[6] Impressively, both studies showed these compounds *outperforming* known anabolic androgenic steroids.[6]

On to human research, German researchers published a study in 2019 showing just as much potential in collegiate weightlifters, getting either placebo, 12 milligrams per day, or 48 milligrams per day.[7] The results speak for themselves:



Ecdysterone increased muscle mass gains in collegiate male weightlifters[7]



Ecdysterone increased strength gains in collegiate male weightlifters[7]

The researchers were so impressed by the results that they concluded stating, “This project demonstrates the performance-enhancing effect of ecdysterone in humans. Thus, our results strongly suggest including ecdysterone in class S1 ‘Anabolic Agents’.”[7]

Effectively, they’re saying that it’s so strong that it should be on worldwide *banned substances lists* – yet is not, as of time of press through 2022. Other researchers have similarly opined.[2]

Now what about *turkesterone*??!

Turkesterone: lesser-researched, but potentially insane gains

In 1998, researchers in Uzbekistan tested turkesterone (isolated from *A. turkestanica* like we have here) in rats against *methandrostenolone*, also known as *dbol*. The results were absolutely insane:[8]

Two different turkesterone samples outperformed the androgenic anabolic steroid in terms of body mass and organ increases! The data is shown below:

TABLE 2. Influence of the Substances Investigated on the Weights of Organs and on their Protein Contents in Intact Sexually Immature Rats ($M \pm m, n = 6-8$)

Organ	Nature of the experiment	Weight of the organ, mg	Protein content of the organ	
			%	mg
Liver	Control	4586± 268	17.2±0.38	788±46.0
	Turkesterone, sample I	5862±218*	17.8±0.40	1043±62.4*
	Turkesterone, sample II	5744±224*	17.6±0.36	1010±58.8*
	Nerobol	5698±216*	17.6±0.38	1002±42.8*
Heart	Control	388±16.0	16.2±0.40	62.8±3.8
	Turkesterone, sample I	482±12.0*	17.4±0.62	84.6±5.6*
	Turkesterone, sample II	486±12.8*	17.0±0.64	81.9±4.2*
	Nerobol	490±14.6*	17.6±0.56	86.2±5.8*
Kidneys	Control	396±13.4	15.9±0.70	62.9±3.8
	Turkesterone, sample I	520±24.8*	17.2±0.88	89.4±4.8*
	Turkesterone, sample II	530±26.0*	17.2±0.82	91.2±5.2*
	Nerobol	544±25.8*	17.4±0.86	94.6±6.0*
Tibialis anterior muscle	Control	168±8.8	17.8±0.14	29.9±1.2
	Turkesterone, sample I	220±10.2*	18.2±0.78	40.0±2.6
	Turkesterone, sample II	216±9.2*	18.0±0.80	38.8±2.8*
	Nerobol	228±10.4*	18.6±0.82	42.4±3.2*

The anabolic effects of turkesterone were greater than those of dbol in rats![8]

Needless to say, we're extraordinarily excited about turkesterone and phytoecdysteroids in general. It'd be good to know how much ecdysterone is in Hollow Point, because there's clearly promise there as well.

We definitely want to see more data in humans, and would love to see blood tests as well. Much of this is covered in our main *turkesterone* article, where we suggest a panel of blood tests that would be very helpful to see before and after a run of Hollow Point.

Next up, we can boost nitric oxide and work to downshift *myostatin* levels:

- **Epicatechin (Camellia sinensis) (Bean) (std. 90% epicatechin) – 300 mg**

Many have read news of health benefits of plants like *green tea* and *cocoa*, the latter of which has many beneficial flavonols.[9] What many don't know is that there's a driving force underlying them: **epicatechin**.



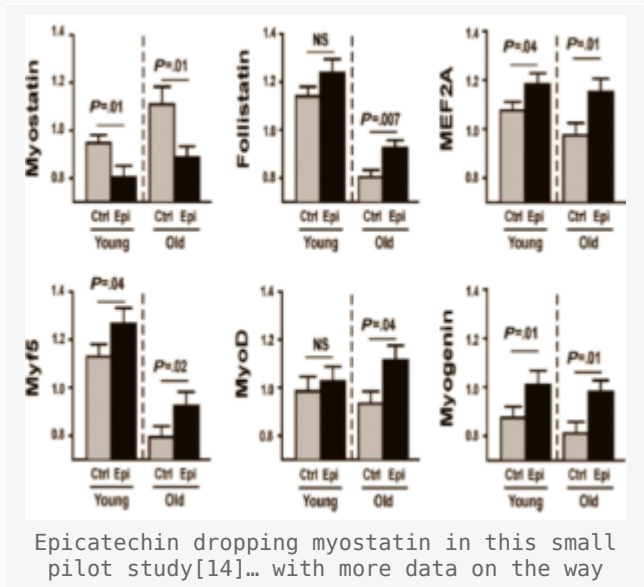
Scientifically written as (-)-*epicatechin* in research, this ingredient has *numerous* health benefits, many of which relate to body composition and muscle growth:

- Greater nitric oxide production, leading to improved blood flow,
- Reduced myostatin levels,
- Improved insulin sensitivity,
- Better lipid levels, and
- Lower blood pressure

In terms of *nitric oxide production*, researchers have seen 54% greater serum NO levels when participants eat 30 grams of dark chocolate (at 70% cocoa) per day compared to a white chocolate control (which has far less epicatechin).[10] This and multiple other studies have shown blood pressure reductions,[10-13] which is expected with elevated nitric oxide levels.

While we know that improved NO can increase muscle growth,[14] we can get plenty of nitric oxide support from *Merica Labz BOOM* and *Stars and Pipes*. What else can epicatechin do?

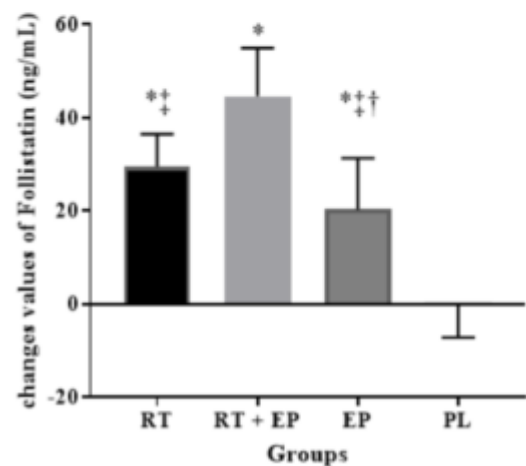
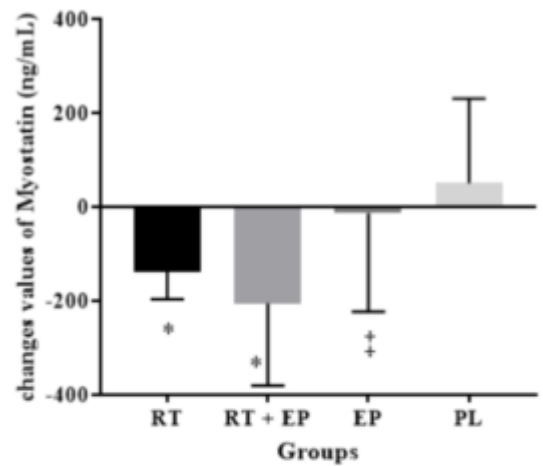
Epicatechin: supporting muscle growth



A 2014 pilot study showed that 1mg/kg of epicatechin given twice daily (roughly 175 milligrams of epicatechin per day) **reduced myostatin levels by 16.6 and increased follistatin levels by 49.2%**. [15] This is incredible, because *myostatin* regulates muscle growth, preventing them from growing out of control. Follistatin, however, *regulates myostatin*, preventing myostatin itself from getting out of control.

This is a great biological system to govern growth, but sometimes we want to downregulate it a bit. Epicatechin seems to do just that.

Additionally, hand grip strength increased by 7% in that brief pilot study after just one week, an interesting finding. Another arm of the study used mice, who had a 15% reduction in myostatin as well. [15]



This study was performed on elderly, but alongside resistance training, epicatechin had the best results on myostatin and follistatin levels![16]

More recently, a longer 8-week study on seniors found that epicatechin combined with resistance training yielded better gains in strength (leg press and chest press) as well as follistatin and follistatin/myostatin ratio.[16] Those who were given epicatechin and resistance training outperformed resistance training alone, which is a variable we love to see tested.

Epicatechin and endurance

There have also been at least a couple of animal studies showing improved endurance capacity with similar amounts of epicatechin (roughly 1 milligram per kilogram per day).[17,18]

Insulin sensitivity improvements

We want our muscles *insulin sensitive* so that they can appropriately use glycogen and reuptake carbohydrates into the cells. One of the studies cited above regarding dark chocolate's administration improving blood pressure levels *also* showed improved glucose disposal.[11] We're not sure how much *epicatechin* itself played into this, but it's worth investigating for those of

you trying to hammer home every last carb into muscle tissue.

This is a great dosage too. For a while, 200 milligrams was the norm – but you know *Merica Labz* is going to go big with more than that!

- **Bioperine (*Piper nigrum*) (Fruit) (std. to 95% *piperine*) – 10 mg**

To boost uptake a bit more, we have **Bioperine**, which is a trademark black pepper extract standardized for 95% *piperine*. It is generally used because it's a *bioavailability enhancer* that can inhibit enzymes that metabolize compounds while stimulating the gut's amino acid transporters.[19-22]

Piperine also has some metabolic qualities that should pair well with epicatechin, as it upregulates the GLUT4 transporter,[23] improving the body's ability to shuttle glucose into cells.

Dosage and Instructions



The Hollow Point label states to take two capsules daily with food. Due to the

nitric oxide boosting capabilities of epicatechin, we suggest taking it *pre-workout*. On off-training days (if you have such a thing), take your two capsules with food around the same time of day.

Hollow Point: Stacks with Full Metal Jacket

Hollow Point is a play on the other Merica Labz muscle building supplement *Full Metal Jacket*. These two can be put together for quite the natty stack, helping to interfere with estrogen while providing the body some anabolic tools.

In any conversation about muscle-building, we also have to mention creatine and betaine, and you can get a solid dose of creatine in the latest version of Merica Labz *Red, White, & Boom* pre-workout supplement. In that case, you'd likely want to add 2.5 grams of betaine separately in the day. Alternatively, there's 2.5 grams of betaine in Merica Labz *Napa!m Red, White, & Boom* – and then you'd want to add 3-5 grams of creatine elsewhere in the day.

And of course, for more *testosterone* support, add in **Liberty Ballz**.

With these taken care of, it's then up to you to chase the *protein* game. Merica Labz can help you there as well, with both *Patriot's Whey* and the *Super Sized* weight gainer.

With these tools put together, it's then up to you to go blow it up in the gym!

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