

The Health Benefits of American Ginseng.

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American Ginseng

Uses

American ginseng is typically taken by mouth to reduce stress, boost the immune system, and act as a stimulant. Often, this herb is used to fight infections such as colds or the flu. The herb is also used for fighting a variety of other infections including:

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Patrick Mansfield

Intestinal infections (dysentery)

Infections, called Pseudomonas infections, that typically occur in people diagnosed with cystic fibrosis

Additional uses include improving digestion as well as fighting the following conditions:

Vomiting
Fever

Dizziness

Headaches

Inflammation of the colon (Colitis)

Inflammation of the stomach lining (Gastritis)

Loss of appetite

Surprisingly, the herb contains a host of applications against a variety of serious health conditions and diseases as well. Further possible uses include:

Anemia - low iron in the blood

Diabetes

HIV-related insulin resistance

Fatigue associated with cancer

High blood pressure
Insomnia
Nerve pain
Erectile dysfunction
Memory loss
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder - ADHD
Bleeding disorders
Breast cancer
Symptoms associated with a hangover
Convulsions
Fibromyalgia
Atherosclerosis
Rheumatoid arthritis
Schizophrenia
Menopause symptoms

The herb is also popular for increasing athletic performance, raising mental capacity, slowing down the aging process, nervous exhaustion, and treating complications during childbirth or pregnancy.

Occasionally, it is even used as an ingredient in certain soft drinks. Soap and cosmetic products also utilize extracts and oils from the herb.

Distinctions Between Other Species

American ginseng is not to be confused with Siberian ginseng - scientifically known as *Eleutherococcus Senticosus* - or Asian ginseng - scientifically named *Panax ginseng*. These different species of ginseng offer different medicinal benefits.

Diabetes

Taking 3 grams of American ginseng before a meal can potentially lower blood sugar after a meal in people diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Higher doses do not necessarily create a greater effect.

Consuming 100-200 mg of this herb by mouth for 8 weeks might also contribute to lower blood sugar levels prior to meals in patients with type 2 diabetes. Researchers believe different ginseng products have varied effects due to the different amounts of active compounds, ginsenosides, present.

Respiratory Tract Infections

Certain evidence suggests that CVT-E002 (found in Cold-FX and Afexa Life Sciences products), a specific American ginseng extract, taken in 200mg doses twice per day for 3-4 months of the flu season may prevent cold and flu infections in adults aged 18 to 65.

Adults older than 65 generally require a flu shot around the 2-month mark in order to boost the success of the extract. In the chance of an infection, the extract appears to reduce symptoms and the duration of the sickness.

Evidence also suggests that even if infection occurs, the chance of a repeat infection is reduced. Patients with weakened immune systems may not experience results.

Possible Areas of Ineffectiveness

The herb's effect on athletic performance is questionable - 1600mg taken for 4 weeks showed no improvement in performance. However, it may help decrease muscle damage experienced during exercise.

Safety Concerns

When taken by mouth in studied doses (100 - 3000mg daily) for a short time (up to 12 weeks), it is considered likely safe. Single doses (up to 10 grams) have also been studied for safety. A specific ginseng extract labeled CVT-E002, mentioned earlier, has been safely used up to 4 months.

Side Effects

Potential side effects include:

- Diarrhea
- Itching
- Insomnia
- Headache
- Nervousness
- Rapid heartbeat
- Increased or decreased blood pressure
- Breast tenderness
- Vaginal bleeding

Less common but more serious side effects include a severe rash known as Stevens-Johnson syndrome, liver damage, and allergic reaction.

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