



Blue Cohosh

Important "*women's herb*" to treat women's health problems, as well as bronchitis and rheumatism.

Information: Herbals/Nutritionals/Medicinals can be very strong. Consequently, if they are not tailored to your specific needs, they can do more harm than good. This information is meant to be used by your VHC Medical Team and personal Physician as they build your Total Health Plan. Never attempt to adjust your prescribed medications and/or Natural Treatments without your physician's and Medical Team's knowledge and guidance. Since herbals/nutritionals and medications can interact with each other, it is always advisable to consult with your health care provider and The Vibrant Health Community at www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com (or call 1-866-378-8253) before starting or changing your program.

Botanical: *Caulophyllum thalictroides*

Family: *Berberidaceae* (barberry)

Other common names: Squaw Root, Papoose Root, Blue Ginseng, Yellow Ginseng, Beech Drops, Blueberry Root

Blue Cohosh is an important "*women's herb*" that was introduced to early American settlers by Native Americans to ease childbirth, menstrual problems and pelvic inflammation. It is an herbal medicine used for missing menstrual periods, painful periods and, historically, for false or early labor (birth) pains. Modern herbalists still use it to treat women's health problems, as well as bronchitis and rheumatism.

History: Blue Cohosh is an acrid, bitter, warming, native American perennial. Reaching between one and three feet in height, this handsome plant grows wild in many parts of North America in rich, moist soil in shade and near running streams and around swamps. It is so bitter that animals will not eat it when grazing, and the berries of the plant are toxic and cannot be used as medicine. Blue Cohosh was commonly used by the Native American tribes to alleviate cramps, ease menstrual problems and to facilitate childbirth. The Cherokee, Chippewa and Iroquois used it for delayed delivery and to promote menstruation. Early settlers learned of the herb's beneficial properties from the Native Americans and used it for promoting labor and easing the pain of childbirth, so that prolonged labor and exhaustion would be diminished. The common use of the herb for childbirth and labor gave rise to several of its common names, i.e., Papoose Root and Squaw Root. Its popular use in herbal medicine led to its inclusion in the *United States Pharmacopoeia*

(1882-1905). Some of Blue Cohosh's constituents include beta-carotene, caulophylline (its active principle), saponin, caulophyllo-saponin, gum, starch, phytosterols, soluble resin, vital minerals (potassium, magnesium, calcium, selenium, iron, silicon and phosphorus, which help to alkalinize the blood and urine), B-vitamins and vitamin C. The roots of Blue Cohosh are used in herbal medicine.

Beneficial Uses: Blue Cohosh has been used primarily for hundreds of years to help women, particularly in the area of childbirth. The herb stimulates uterine contractions and induces and promotes the onset of labor when delivery is due or in cases of delayed labor. It also helps in cases of prolonged labor by relaxing the uterus and increasing cervical dilation for easier delivery, less pain, and exhaustion and, thus, has earned the nickname, "A Woman's Best Friend." In contrast, Blue Cohosh will also stop false labor pains.

As an effective diuretic, Blue Cohosh induces and increases the flow of urine and will help eliminate excess water in the system. The herb also promotes heavy perspiration, which will help eliminate toxins through the skin.

As a mild expectorant, Blue Cohosh is still used today by herbalists to reduce congestion and help treat bronchitis.

Blue Cohosh is a tonic that has been known to calm and improve nervous disorders (it has been used to treat hysteria). It is also said to be useful for memory problems. As an antispasmodic, the herb affects the whole system, thereby having an additional effect on the nervous system. Blue Cohosh has been used to relieve muscle cramps, spasms and some epileptic seizures, hiccough (hiccup) and whooping cough.

In further promoting women's good health, Blue Cohosh is believed to have beneficial effects on uterine ailments, including leukorrhea (vaginal discharge) and vaginitis (inflammation of the vagina). The herb is also thought to help pelvic inflammatory disease, endometriosis, erratic menstruation and retained placenta. In addition, the herb is also believed to relieve ovarian neuralgia.

Blue Cohosh is an anti-inflammatory that helps to reduce the inflammation of rheumatism, arthritis and gout. Blue Cohosh is considered an emmenagogue, an agent that is used to encourage menstruation and regulate its flow.

An old use for Blue Cohosh was as an effective anthelmintic, a medicine that destroys or expels worms that inhabit the intestinal canal. An alkaloid in Blue Cohosh, methylcytisine, appears to stimulate intestinal activity and may, thus, be responsible for this purging action.

Contraindications: This herb should be used with caution; it can be quite irritating to the mucous membranes and should be used only under the supervision of a physician. Nursing mothers and Children should not take Blue Cohosh. Pregnant women should not use this herb, as it stimulates contractions. Blue Cohosh should not be taken for an indefinite period of time (a week at a time is recommended) and should be avoided by patients with hypertension and heart disease or are taking heart disease medications, such as Lanoxin, digoxin, Cardizem, Dilacor, diltiazem, Calan, Isoptin and verapamil.