



# Chicory

The herb's diuretic and laxative properties have been used as a *purifying tonic for the blood, liver and kidneys*. And it will help to *counteract stomach acid after eating too much rich food*. Recent studies show promise for Chicory Root in the area of good heart health by fighting fat and cholesterol in the blood and controlling rapid heartbeat.

**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](http://www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com) (or call 1-866-378-8253) before starting or changing your program.

**Botanical:** *Cichorium intybus*

**Family:** *Compositae* (daisy) - *Asteraceae* (aster)

**Other common names:** Coffee Weed, Succory, Blue Dandelion, Garden Endive, Wild Succory, Hendibeh, Blue Sailors

**History:** Chicory is a rather scruffy-looking, weedy perennial that is native to Europe, and it was imported to the United States during the eighteenth century by early colonists. It is so plentiful that it is almost believed to be indigenous to North America, where it grows cultivated and wild and may be found in fields, pastures, marginal areas and even invades lawns and gardens. The leaves at the plant's base are large and hairy, somewhat resembling those of a dandelion, giving Chicory one of its common names, Blue Dandelion. It has been suggested that another of its common names, Succory, is of Latin derivation, from *succurrere*, meaning "to run under" because of the depth to which the root penetrates. From the base, many two- to three-foot, stick-like stems arise, producing widely spaced foliage and milky sap; and bright, almost iridescent, blue flowers bloom on the stems, as if stapled to the wrong plant. Chicory will grow in almost any soil but prefers rich, well-drained, neutral-to-alkaline soil in sun. The rootstock is light yellow outside and white inside and also contains a bitter, milky juice, and the entire plant has been used in herbal medicine (primarily as a cleansing and toning herb) for thousands of years. The ancient Romans used Chicory as a blood purifier and also as a food, and it has remained an important crop throughout continental Europe to this day. The

sixteenth century herbalist, Parkinson, described Chicory as a "fine, cleansing, jovial plant," and French herbalist, Maurice Mességué, maintains that the reason Chicory is so popular in France as a coffee addition or substitute is that it is a good "liver herb," toning and detoxifying the livers of those who enjoy French cuisine a bit too much. The leaves of Chicory may be eaten as a vegetable and added to salads and herb butters, and the roots are highly valued for medical preparations and for use as a coffee substitute or enrichment to balance its flavor and to counter the coffee's acidic quality and adverse effects on the stomach. The leaves of the young roots, which have a slightly bitter, caramel flavor when roasted, are dried and roasted to create a rich and flavorful coffee blend or caffeine-free coffee substitute, called Chicory coffee, which is especially popular in France. In World War II, when there was a shortage of coffee in the United States, Chicory coffee was a great substitute. Chicory Roots are lifted in early spring of the second year, dried, and used in cuisines and as a bitter, cooling herb in herbal medicine. Some of the constituents in Chicory Root include a bitter principle, inulin and sugar.

**Beneficial Uses:** Chicory Root is considered a fine liver, gallbladder and spleen tonic. The herb is called a "cholagogue" or substance that promotes the production of bile and stimulates its flow from the gallbladder and bile ducts, and as such, is said to help purify blood and cleanse the liver and gallbladder, which helps to release and dissolve gallstones, expel excess internal mucus and treat liver complaints, such as jaundice and enlarged liver.

The bitter principle in Chicory Root is believed to be beneficial for the glandular organs of the digestive system. The root is said to neutralize acid and correct acid indigestion, heartburn, gastritis, vomiting, upset stomach and lack of appetite. And Chicory Root has been approved by the German Commission E as a remedy for poor appetite and dyspepsia. The increased bile production also helps to speed up the digestive process, further aiding the stomach after eating too much rich food (a use very popular in France).

Chicory Root may be helpful in the area of good heart health. Recent studies have produced some very positive evidence that Chicory Root fights fat in the system. Those with a very high fat diet experienced a remarkable decrease in blood cholesterol levels in time after taking Chicory Root, which may prove very helpful in cases of hardening of the arteries. Moreover, Egyptian scientists have investigated the

potential use of Chicory Root in treating tachycardia (rapid heartbeat). Their studies showed the presence of a digitalis-like principle in the root, which actually decreased the rate of heartbeat in laboratory animals. Hopefully, this will have a beneficial impact on human health.

Chicory Root has been used as a tonic that nourishes and strengthens kidney function and urinary organs. The herb has a diuretic action that increases and promotes the flow of urine, which helps to cleanse the kidneys of toxins and remove them from the body. It has been used to remove gravel, calcium deposits, and excess uric acid from the body, which helps to prevent gout and kidney stones.

As a mild laxative, Chicory Root is good for expelling morbid matter from the intestines, further purifying the system of waste and toxins and often helping in cases of constipation.

Used externally, Chicory Root is believed to have healing properties for skin lacerations, swellings, hemorrhoids, poison ivy and sunburn. In addition, it has been used in poultices to reduce the inflammation of rheumatism and the pain of stiff and sore joints.

**Contraindications:** Pregnant and nursing women should not use Chicory Root.