



Elecampane

An ancient treatment for *indigestion and respiratory ailments*, today's herbalists still rely on **Elecampane** to *relieve bronchitis, asthma, emphysema and whooping coughs*. It helps to ease non-productive, hacking coughs by loosening stubborn phlegm. Elecampane is an exceptionally rich source of inulin, a polysaccharide, that is sometimes used as a sugar substitute for diabetics.

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: *Inula helenium*

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

Other common names: Inula, Elfdock, Elfwort, Velvet Dock, Horse-elder, Scabwort, Horseheal, Wild Sunflower, Yellow Starwort, Alant

History: Elecampane is a strikingly handsome perennial plant that may grow to ten feet in height. It is native to Eurasia, but is now cultivated and also grows wild along roadsides and waste places in temperate regions everywhere. Elecampane was probably brought to North America for its widely held reputation as an effective remedy for the skin diseases of sheep and horses (hence, its common names, Horseheal and Scabwort). It is found eastward of Minnesota and Missouri and northward from North Carolina into Canada. One of the most important herbs to the ancient Greeks and Romans as a medicine and condiment, Elecampane was regarded as almost a cure-all for ailments as diverse as dropsy, asthma, bronchitis, melancholy, menstrual disorders and digestive upsets (Horace relates how the Romans took *Inula* for indigestion after dining too richly). Galen recommended its use for sciatica, and both the Greeks and Romans used it in cold remedies, because it was thought to promote sweating and help bring up phlegm. Its botanical specific, *helenium*, appears to be a Latin corruption of the Greek, *helenion*, and is said to be named after Helen of Troy, because she was thought to be gathering Elecampane when abducted by Paris. The name Elecampane is said to be a corruption of "*enula*

campana," so-called because the herb was found growing wild in Campania.

The rootstock has been used for centuries in herbal medicine, being a common remedy for respiratory and digestive illnesses in the Middle Ages, and was even incorporated into a medieval digestive wine called *Potio Paulina*, an allusion to Saint Paul's biblical injunction to "use a little wine for they stomach's sake." The Anglo-Saxons used the herb as a tonic, for skin disease and leprosy, and by the nineteenth century, Elecampane was used to treat skin disease, neuralgia, liver problems and coughs.

In England at that time the herb was included in candies and lozenges and taken each night and morning for asthmatic complaints. In today's herbal medicine, Elecampane is a favorite remedy for respiratory problems, including bronchitis and coughs. Some of the herb's constituents include mucilage, essential oil (including azulenes), sterols; and it is an exceptionally rich source of inulin (also called alantoin), a mucilage-like polysaccharide, that is sometimes used as a sugar substitute for diabetics.

Beneficial Uses: Elecampane is an old and respected remedy for respiratory ailments. The herb is thought to warm and strengthen the lungs and promote expectoration by loosening stubborn phlegm and congestion. As an antitussive, Elecampane is used to quiet and treat non-productive, hacking coughs, chronic bronchitis and whooping cough. It also cleanses and tones the mucous membrane of the lungs, which has helped relieve asthma, emphysema and consumptive diseases.

For many centuries, Elecampane has been effective in treating indigestion and intestinal complaints and is recommended as a fine, daily tonic that tones the stomach and its mucous membranes, inhibiting excessive phlegm that results from weak digestion. The herb's mucilage content also has a soothing effect on the intestines and helps to relieve intestinal catarrh.

Elecampane is a powerful diaphoretic and increases perspiration profusely, helping to reduce fevers and cleanse toxins from the body through the skin. Recent developments have claimed that Elecampane may be of great help in cases of congestive heart failure.

In clinical studies, the herb was said to relieve shortness of breath caused by exertion and may (in correct dosage) provide more pain relief than nitroglycerin. Elecampane has been used to expel worms, including pinworms, from the intestine. Alantolactone, one of the herb's active ingredients, is considered an "anthelmintic," an agent that destroys and expels parasites.

As a diuretic, Elecampane has been used to help people whose urine has stopped or who have difficulty urinating. It is also thought to reduce water retention.

Elecampane is a liver stimulant and is called a "chologogue," an herb that stimulates the flow of bile from the liver into the intestines, which is very useful for hepatic ailments, as well as further helping digestive disorders.

Elecampane's antibacterial properties have been known to kill ordinary bacterial organisms, also being particularly destructive to the tubercle bacillus. Used externally, its antiseptic application is useful as a wash for such skin problems as scabies and itches.

Contraindications: Pregnant or nursing women should not use Elecampane. Those who suffer from allergies to members of the daisy family (ragweed, asters, sunflowers, etc.) should consult a doctor before using this product. Diabetics should not use Elecampane without consulting a physician, and overuse (more than recommended dosage) may cause vomiting, diarrhea or a feeling of unusual heartbeat.

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