



Evening Primrose

Has a long tradition of *relieving coughs, asthma, gastrointestinal difficulties and menstrual complaints* (including cyclical breast pain). May help in the *prevention of heart attacks caused by thrombosis, and reduce blood pressure and promote overall good health.*

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: *Oenothera biennis*

Family: *Onagraceae* (evening primrose)

Other common names: Evening Star, Tree Primrose, King's Cure-all, Evening Plant, Night Willow Herb, Scurvish, Scabish, Sun Drop, Field Primrose, German Rampion, Fever Plant

History: As night falls and the moon rises, the Evening Primrose blooms, and a lemon-scented fragrance radiates from its yellow petals. By daybreak, the flowers fade and await the new blossoms that will bloom the next evening. The entire plant is edible, and it was once a popular food for North American Indians who also used it as a painkiller and as an asthma treatment. The oil derived from the seeds contains rare gamma linolenic acid, mucilage, tannin, lignin, amino acids, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, essential fatty acids, B-vitamins and vitamin E.

Beneficial Uses: Evening Primrose possesses a high content of the rare gamma linolenic acid (GLA) that appears to produce a host of beneficial effects. GLA is an unsaturated fatty acid that assists in the production of prostaglandins, the hormones necessary for many important bodily functions. GLA helps the body produce energy and forms part of the structural fats that comprise the brain, muscle, bone marrow and cell membranes.

For the promotion of cardiovascular health, the prostaglandins formed by GLA in Evening Primrose

are said to have anticoagulating properties that dilate the blood vessels and reduce the blocking of blood vessels by a blood clot, thereby helping to prevent heart attacks and strokes. In addition, GLA is said to lower levels of cholesterol and blood pressure, further reducing the possibility of heart disease and stroke. The increased blood circulation properties in Evening Primrose are also thought to be beneficial in cases Raynaud's syndrome.

GLA plays a crucial role in the health of the brain and nervous system, and Evening Primrose has been recommended as a supportive treatment for multiple sclerosis and other degenerative diseases. Gamma linolenic acid deficiency is said to be associated with many health problems. Those with premenstrual syndrome and cyclical breast pain associated with the menstrual cycle, diabetes, scleroderma, Sjogren's syndrome, eczema and other skin conditions may have a metabolic block that interferes with the body's ability to make GLA. In preliminary research, supplementation with Evening Primrose has helped people with these conditions.

Certain disorders or diseases may block the body's ability to make gamma linolenic acid (GLA), and

Evening Primrose oil can supplement that deficiency, which in turn should help to ease the conditions that block the conversions in the first place. Some of these ailments include blood sugar problems, chronic inflammatory disorders, nutrient deficiencies and the metabolizing of hydrogenated oils and fats, as well as many other problems that may be helped by better balance of fatty acids in the body; therefore, people with deficiencies would presumably benefit from supplemental GLA intake from Evening Primrose.

Evening Primrose has been used as a traditional supplement for its stimulating effects on the liver, spleen and digestive apparatus and is said to help gastric irritation, irritable bladder, chronic diarrhea and fatty acid problems.

In modern herbal medicine the mucilage in Evening Primrose is used in cough remedies to help inhibit coughing, whooping cough and to help relieve cold symptoms.

Evening Primrose is considered an antispasmodic that helps to alleviate spasmodic asthma and menstrual cramps. In treating female problems, Evening Primrose acts as a natural estrogen promoter and therefore can help to relieve heavy bleeding, headache, breast tenderness and bloating. This is also said to have favorable effects when used for menopausal discomforts, such as hot flashes.

In some studies, Evening Primrose was thought to help treat schizophrenia, depression and premenstrual syndrome, especially when related to mood swings. Research continues into treatments

for anorexia nervosa, hyperactivity, alcoholism and chronic anxiety. There is evidence that alcoholics may be deficient in GLA, and a double-blind study suggested that alcohol withdrawal may be facilitated with Evening Primrose supplementation.

Evening Primrose is an anti-inflammatory that has been used topically to soothe skin eruptions and is an astringent for healing wounds. In 1982, the British medical journal, *Lancet*, noted that Evening Primrose might be of help to people who suffer from rosacea, atopic eczema, psoriasis, skin rashes or eczema due to allergy.

Contraindications: Pregnant women should not use Evening Primrose, and excessive use may result in oily skin, an indication to decrease dosage. Because of its blood-thinning properties, Evening Primrose should be avoided by those who are taking prescription bloodthinners (aspirin, clopidogrel (Plavix), ticlopidine (Ticlid), warfarin (Coumadin), enoxaparin (Lovenox). Evening Primrose may exacerbate symptoms of temporal lobe epilepsy and should be avoided by those who are treated for seizure disorders: phenytoin (Dilantin), valproic acid (Depakote, Depakene), carbamazepine (Tegretol), gabapentin (Neurontin), lamotrigine (Lamictal). Do not take Evening Primrose if you are taking medication for mental conditions (examples: chlorpromazine (Thorazine), thioridazine (Mellaril), perphenazine (Trilafon). Some experts suggest that magnesium, zinc, vitamin C, niacin and vitamin B-6 should be taken along with this herb. Evening Primrose may cause nausea, diarrhea, bloating, vomiting or gas.